



## COLUMN ONE

### Clerics to get the MBA lowdown on mammon

It may be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter Heaven; but it may also be easier for a priest to balance the books and manage his parish when he has a business degree course under his belt.

Members of the Church of England's General Synod are being invited to sign up for a new MBA course on how to run churches using business principles. The image of priests priming themselves on the finer points of corporate strategy may seem a touch too worldly, but it is all in the name of providing a better service for customers.

The two-year masters degree at Bishop Grosseteste University College, in Lincoln, is available to both clergy and senior lay members of the Church of England. It aims to convert students into "effective and imaginative managers and leaders, faithful to their religious calling."

Such courses are mainstream in the United States, where many churches already see their role as providing a "quality service" to worshippers. Canon Raymond Rodgers, the Bishop of Lincoln's personal assistant, suggested the course after attending an MBA programme run by the Graduate Theological Foundation of Indiana.

Roman Catholic and Southern Baptist churches in the US offered a service which was "directly comparable" to ideas of quality service among businesses, he said.

However, some church members remain unconvinced of the value of such a course. "The resistance comes from people whose thinking concept seems to be that members of the Church are guided by the Spirit, which will blow them where it will," said Canon Rodgers. "The Spirit is chaotic and therefore they are resistant to any kind of management structures. They look for inspiration, spontaneity and creativity - and they think



Balancing act: The Church of England wants better management

management is the enemy of that.

"To win them round I have to suggest that you couldn't organise the high-street stores in this way, or any kind of secular organisation, for that matter. We believe that we are here to win people's souls so we, of all people, should be offering the best of what the world has to offer... We need to think of the worshipper in the pew as the person we serve. We need to look at their needs and think how we can exceed them."

Like more mainstream business and management courses, Britain's first MBA in church management offers modules on corporate strategy, financial planning and control, change management and developing people in organisations. Students will also be able to choose from six theological modules, including theology for management, spirituality in organisations and appraisal in Christian contexts.

Eileen Baker, principal of Bishop Grosseteste College, where the course is being run in collaboration with Hull University, said there was a need seriously to study management in relation to the Church.

"Theology deals with belief systems and behaviour that derive from man's relationship with God and direct our relations with each other," she said. "Successful management depends on getting systems and relationships right, so the two areas of study have a great deal in common."

Dr Mark Chater, who will be leading the course, which starts in September, added: "It is not about church people taking on management language and values uncritically. It is about a useful harnessing of management skills and insights to our theological and missionary task."

— Clare Garner

#### TOURIST RATES

Australia (dollars)	2.41	Italy (lira)	2,833
Austria (schillings)	20.13	Japan (yen)	205.73
Belgium (francs)	59.18	Malta (lira)	0.62
Canada (\$)	2.33	Netherlands (guilders)	3.22
Cyprus (pounds)	0.83	Norway (kroner)	12.00
Denmark (kroner)	10.99	Portugal (escudos)	291.76
France (francs)	9.60	Spain (pesetas)	242.45
Germany (marks)	2.87	Sweden (kroner)	12.78
Greece (drachmes)	458.27	Switzerland (francs)	2.34
Hong Kong (\$)	12.35	Turkey (lira)	342.116
Ireland (punts)	1.13	USA (\$)	1.60

Source: Thomas Cook. Rates for indication purposes only

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## PEOPLE



Jimmy Wray, who sacked his wife as his secretary, pictured with his girlfriend Laura Stewart

### MP must pay £6,000 to estranged wife

Labour MP Jimmy Wray was yesterday ordered to pay more than £6,000 for wrongly sacking his estranged wife as his constituency secretary.

An industrial tribunal ordered him to pay £6,089 to Catherine Wray, who the Glasgow Ballieston MP had accused at a hearing earlier this month of waging a "vendetta" against him.

The three-man tribunal ruled that he had unfairly dismissed her as his secretary last May.

In its written findings, the tribunal said the essence of Mr Wray's case was that her employment had ended with the dissolution of Parliament.

But the tribunal determined: "The tribunal was unable to accept that the applicant's employment was brought to an end by performance of a specified task or project."

"The work which she was employed to do was secretarial duties. There was no evidence that the applicant's employment was other than continuous from June 1987 until her employment was terminated at

most ten years later on April 30 1997.

"At that time the need for secretarial services still remained."

Mrs Wray had no immediate comment on her victory, a spokesman for her said yesterday.

The ruling followed a tribunal hearing earlier this month in Glasgow at which Mr Wray, 63, a former boxer, made an emotional and bitter attack on his estranged wife. After the hearing, he revealed his that girlfriend, Laura Walker, was pregnant and they hoped to marry soon.

His marriage to Catherine took place in 1985. The tribunal's written findings stated she worked part-time as his secretary from June 1987 from the matrimonial home. Her duties included contact with constituents, taking phone calls, and forwarding mail.

But by 1994 the pair were living in separate rooms in the matrimonial home, said the tribunal. They separated in the following year and Mr Wray moved out while she remained in their house in Glasgow.

### Lady Spencer sues lawyers over public divorce

Countess Spencer is claiming around £2m in damages from her former firm of solicitors who advised her before she became involved in what she describes as "one of the most public divorce hearings ever recorded".

The 32-year-old former model, who was married to Earl Spencer, 33, brother of the Princess of Wales, and bore him four children, has issued the writ in the High Court in London against The Family Law Consortium.

They are the London solicitors which advised her before the hearing in Cape Town, South Africa, last month when she won a £1.815,000 settlement after her husband sued for divorce.

Lady Spencer, who admits she has suffered from eating disorders, and addiction, said she had hired the solicitors to "contain the distress" of the divorce proceedings.



Lady Spencer: Divorce claim

which she wanted to be over "as quickly and privately as possible".

But she claims that because of their negligence, "one of the most public divorce hearings ever recorded took place, with the world's press in general and the British press in particular cover-

ing every detail of the proceedings".

She says that if the proceedings had taken place in England, they would have been held in private and the press would have been denied access.

"Publicity, if any, would have been minimal," the writ says.

David Hodson, senior partner in the firm, was aware of her health problems and "the damage that public and stressful divorce proceedings would have been likely to have" on her health, the writ alleges.

Lady Spencer is claiming that she missed out on a much higher divorce settlement by reaching the agreement in South Africa rather than London.

She claims that the High Court would have awarded her a lump sum in the region of £3.35m. A South African court gave her a capital sum of £2,065,000.

### Woody Allen falls foul of courts again

Woody Allen's repeated run-ins with the courts, mostly in his bitter custody battles with ex-love Mia Farrow, were enough to get him dropped from jury duty in New York.

"The courts do not serve justice," Allen told Judge Paul Bookson, called for duty in a civil case this week, turning up in court in jacket and baseball cap.

Allen, 62, lost his child-custody battle with Farrow in 1993, in which his permanently tangled love life was put on very public display.

Despite a series of appeals, Farrow won and kept custody of the couple's biological son Satchel, as

well as two older children, Moses and Dylan, they had adopted jointly. Allen's extended experience of the US court systems has been thoroughly unhappy.

In 1992, Farrow's allegations that he had sexually abused Dylan began a legal ordeal for the comedian and director drawn out over the next several years.

Though his lawyers took it all the way to the New York Supreme Court, his lawyers struggled to win even limited access to his children.

In the original case, Allen was cross-examined on his affair with the eldest of Farrow's adopted children, Soon-Yi Previn, and forced to describe how he took nude pho-

tographs of her.

Soon-Yi is now his wife, but judges who found in Farrow's favour cited the ongoing sexual relationship with the children's older sister as one of their reasons.

The latest of 18 Allen films, *Deconstructing Harry*, opened this December to solid reviews. His fictional foray into courtroom drama came in 1989, however, with *Crimes and Misdemeanours*, an exploration into issues of justice and faith.

He also helped finance *Hotel Terminus*, a documentary on Klaus Barbie and his prosecution for Nazi war crimes.

— Tim Cornwell, Los Angeles

## UPDATE

### MEDICINE

### Complaints against GPs rise

Complaints against family doctors increased last year to an average of one per GP, latest figures show. Complaints against hospitals fell to 92,974 while those against GPs and dentists rose to 36,990. The number of written complaints in 1996-97 was about the same as the previous year at almost 130,000.

Publishing the figures, the first under the new NHS complaints procedure introduced in April 1996, Baroness Jay, the health minister, said complaints were the clearest form of patient dissatisfaction and could improve quality in the NHS.

"The NHS treats many thousands of people every day and the vast majority of them receive excellent treatment. Sometimes things will go wrong. When they do it is very important that they are put right quickly and that lessons are learned. Learning from complaints and using them to improve services will help the NHS to achieve the high standard of care its staff are striving to achieve."

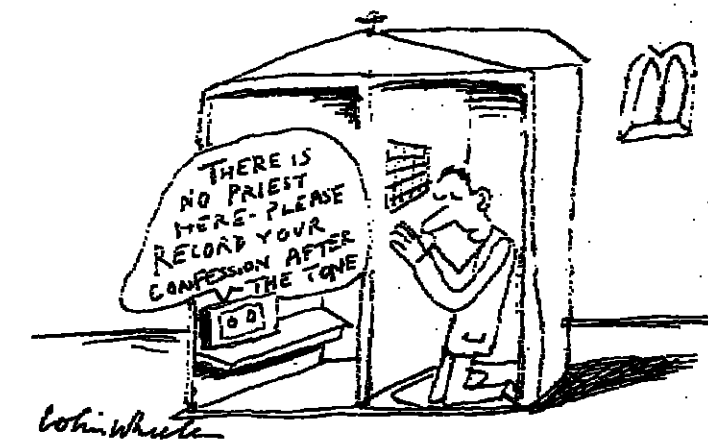
The figures show two thirds of complaints to hospitals were resolved locally within the target time of four weeks. Of the 130,000 complainants, 2,600 remained dissatisfied with efforts to resolve the matter locally and demanded an independent review. This is conducted by an official and an independent lay person who may, if they think there is a case to answer, refer the complaint to an independent review panel.

Baroness Jay said: "Complaints must be handled sensitively, effectively and without delay. That is a basic right of patients. Responding to, even encouraging complaints, and dealing with them locally wherever possible, is a direct way of pushing up the quality of service that the NHS delivers."

— Jeremy Lawrence Health Editor

### RELIGION

### Catholic priesthood in decline



The Dublin archdiocese of Ireland's Catholic church lost 19 priests last year, but ordained just two, according to a new survey.

The figures contained in the report, confirming a serious decline in recruitment to the Irish priesthood, also indicated that, throughout the country, the church was losing clergy at twice the rate at which they could be replaced.

The newspaper survey showed that religious vocations peaked in Ireland between 40 and 50 years ago and that priests ordained during that period are now retiring.

But it warned that an over-optimistic assessment of the present position could be misleading as the number of vocations, exceptionally high in the 1940s and 1950s, was now back a more normal level, at a time when population growth rate was stabilising.

But the figures highlighted the loss of 200 priests in Ireland's 26 dioceses during the past two years, and the ordination of 97.

In a bid to attract men to the priesthood, the Dublin archdiocese last year launched an advertising campaign with the theme "Who are the Men in Black?"

Despite the loss of 35 Dublin clergy over a two-year period, there have been only eight ordinations, with the gap widening throughout 1997.

### TRANSPORT

### Road safety drive for children

The Government is set to launch a new child safety campaign to help youngsters cope with traffic on their way to and from school.

The "Hedgehog" campaign, which aims to promote the message "Stop, Look, Listen, Live", will kick off later this month.

In a Commons written reply, Glenda Jackson, the junior transport minister, said: "We are looking at the number, type and effectiveness of measures set up in England and Wales to try to improve the safety of children going to and from school."

"We will issue guidance to local authorities on this next year."

"As part of the work on the road safety strategy we will consider what further measures could be introduced to improve the safety of children on our roads."

### MONEY

### Brussels role coins it for Britain

A new 50p coin goes into general circulation this month to commemorate the UK's presidency of the European Union.

The coin is the first to use a new portrait of the Queen which will be used on all coins produced from this month.

On the other side is a "celebratory arrangement" of the 12 stars of Europe, depicted as though they are part of a giant firework display.

The 50p piece, the same size as the smaller coin introduced last September, also marks the 25th anniversary of the UK's entry into what was then the European Economic Community. It will carry the dates 1973 and 1998.

The stars design is the work of John Mills, president of the Royal Society of British Sculptors, who has designed previous celebratory coins such as those for the 1996 European Football Championships held in England and the 50th anniversaries of D-Day and the end of the Second World War.

The design was chosen from more than 160 submitted by more than 40 artists.

The new royal portrait, created by Ian Rank-Broadley, is the fourth portrait of the Queen to appear on circulating coins in her 45-year reign.

The Royal Mint will produce five million of the commemorative 50p coins. It was also confirmed yesterday that on 28 February the older, heavier version of the 50p will cease to be legal tender.

### HEALTH

### Dental risk from seatbelts

Some children may be at risk of damaging or losing their teeth when wearing seatbelts, a report suggests.

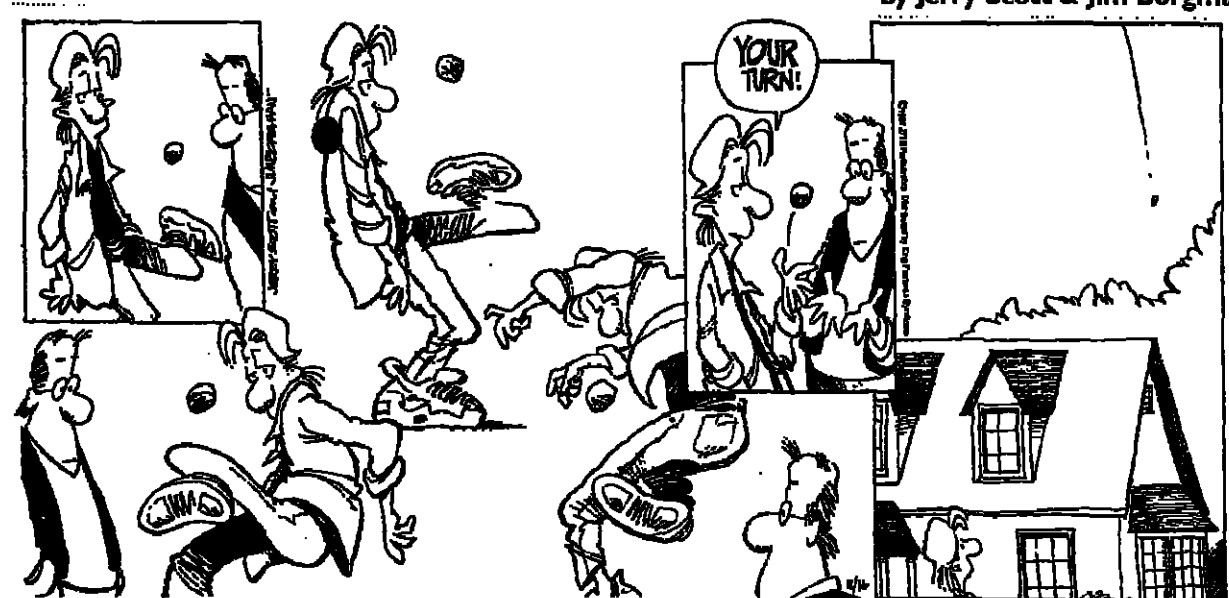
Richard Welbury, from Newcastle Dental Hospital and School, yesterday warned that while seatbelt laws had led to a reduction in serious injuries in children, among youngsters who are too large for safety or "booster" seats and too small for adult seat belts, the risk of injury is increased.

His claims follow a case in which a seven-year-old boy, travelling in this situation, lost a tooth following an emergency stop in his father's car.

The boy was sitting in the front seat when the seatbelt became entangled in his mouth. It is believed that the seatbelt became lodged between two of the boy's lower teeth, one permanent, the other a milk tooth, and the milk tooth became displaced.

It is thought that this is the first documented case of a seatbelt causing just a dental injury.

## ZITS



by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

### Surgeons fight to save Branson balloonist's leg

Surgeons will today try to repair the shattered leg of balloonist Alex Ritchie who was severely injured after a 13,000ft sky dive went wrong.

Mr Ritchie, 52, a close friend of Richard Branson, has already undergone two major operations to fix a series of broken bones and repair damage to his abdomen and pelvis.

He saved the Virgin entrepreneur's life during another balloon trip last year, is being treated in London's Middlesex Hospital after he was flown home by air ambulance from the accident scene in Morocco.

He had been preparing for Mr Branson's latest bid to become the first to fly around the world by balloon.

A hospital spokesman said: "So far the surgery has gone well and Mr Ritchie remains stable."



## Biographers fight for the definitive Mandelson

Peter Mandelson, the man keeping his cards close to his chest over the Millennium Dome, is to be the subject of competing biographies. **Barrie Clement**, Labour Editor, says the Government's eminence grise faces an uncomfortable time in the spotlight.

Paul Routledge, who caused a flurry in the Downing Street dovecotes with his biography of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, is planning a similarly "revealing" book about the minister without portfolio.

Mr Routledge, political correspondent of *The Independent* on Sunday, says he already has a working title: *Mandy - the unauthorised biography*. He believes it will be "in publishable form" by the end of the year.

ironically at the same time as a biography written by colleague Donald Macintyre, chief political commentator on this newspaper.

Mr Routledge, 54, has been identified with "old Labour" and will enjoy no access to the great man. Mr Macintyre, 50, takes up a less archaeological political position and has been given reason to hope for at least one audience with Mr Mandelson.

The minister without portfolio, who guards his privacy with the same zeal that he defends Tony Blair, is said to be unhappy about the attentions of both writers, but will be particularly incensed by the man from the Sunday paper. Mr Mandelson will be sensitive about his alleged role in encouraging and supporting Mr Blair as a candidate for the Labour Party leadership after the death of John Smith. In his biography of Gordon Brown, published last week, Mr Routledge makes it clear that the Chancellor felt betrayed when Mr Blair broke an alleged agree-



Mandelson (centre) is a reluctant subject for Macintyre (left) and Routledge

ment that neither of them would run for the job before consulting the other.

Doubtless the literary contest will be characterised as a "battle of the books", but the two men have been close friends and colleagues for many years. At one stage Mr

Routledge was Labour editor of the *Times* and Mr Macintyre was his deputy and became his successor. Both refused to cross printworkers' picket lines at Rupert Murdoch's Wapping plant, and were dismissed. "My book will not be published in op-

position to Don's," said Mr Routledge, "but it will be in competition. I hope it will be as revelatory as my book on Gordon." *The Independent's* man preferred to keep his own counsel when asked about his rival.

Mr Routledge was last touched by the fickle finger of fame when he was presented to the Queen in bicentenary celebrations at the *Times*. Her Majesty ventured that the miners' strike was the sole responsibility of one man. In an apparent breach of protocol, Mr Routledge told a reporter that the Queen believed that Arthur Scargill was the main cause of the conflict - a story which led news bulletins all over the world.

It is possible that a third Mandelson biography will be published, penned by Francis Beckett, a freelance writer and journalist, who acknowledges the epithet "old Labour" and who is also unlikely to receive any co-operation from the subject.

Editor's letter, page 18

IN MONDAY'S  
INDEPENDENT



**To Sir with love: Deborah Ross meets Sir Geoff Hampton, the head in a class of his own**  
THE MONDAY INTERVIEW

**Ian Brown: Liam Gallagher? He's no star**  
THE EYE

**Opera: Has the ENO found the elixir of success?**  
THE EYE

## Fresh success for British film as home skills lead new wave of Hollywood animators

Hi-tech special effects and feature-length cartoons have long been produced by just one or two companies in Hollywood. **Paul McCann**, Media Correspondent, finds some new players looking to create magic.



The Prince Of Egypt, Steven Spielberg's foray into animation, and (below) a scene from Terminator 2 which drew on British expertise

The British film industry to take on the might of *Star Wars* director George Lucas' with the biggest special effects studio in Europe while in Hollywood Stephen Spielberg is launching an animation studio to challenge Disney's dominance.

PolyGram, the Dutch entertainment company which made *Trainspotting*, is planning to create a special effects company based in Britain that can handle the demands of the growing number of Hollywood movies being made here. It will compete for business with Lucas' famous special effects company Industrial Light & Magic and is likely to be based at one of the big studios at Pinewood, Shepperton or the newly opened studios at Leavesden in Hertfordshire.

The company is being formed first to create effects for *Thunderbirds*, PolyGram's forthcoming live-action film based on the children's animated TV series. *Thunderbirds* has a planned budget of £40m and is forecast to be one of the most expensive UK films ever made. This means it will need better effects than the visible-wires of Gerry Anderson's "Supermarionation" that was used for the *Sixties* series. Previously there has been no effects company in the UK capable of supplying the scale of effects needed for the film - although PolyGram films such as *The Bor-*



rowers have used some British expertise.

Over half of all Hollywood films now made contain computer-generated animation or digital effects such as morphing and PolyGram wants its new unit to be able to handle demand from the increasing number of UK and US productions who use British facilities and craftsmen to make films. As well as the extra capacity at the new Leavesden studio, Shepperton and Pinewood have ex-

panded to meeting demand for British studio facilities.

Industrial Light & Magic itself grew out of the special effects team brought together by George Lucas to create the effects for *Star Wars* in 1975.

Its greatest innovation has been computer generated animation, a technique that allowed images to be conjured out of nothing or real images to be manipulated at will, most famously when Arnold Schwarzenegger was turned

into a liquid-metal robot in *Terminator 2*. Industrial Light & Magic's computer generation was hived off into a separate company, Pixar, which made the Disney film *Toy Story*.

Now more traditional animation is being planned by Disney's former chairman Jeffrey Katzenberg and Stephen Spielberg, his partner in Hollywood's newest studio, Dreamworks SKG.

Dreamworks is investing millions in its own animation studio and its first project will be a feature-length version of the life of Moses.

The £38m film, *The Prince of Egypt*, is being made by many former Disney animators brought over to Dreamworks by Katzenberg. The film, which will be targeted at adults and older children, will feature the voices of actors such as Ralph Fiennes as the Pharaoh Ramses and Helen Mirren as the Pharaoh Queen.

It is planned to be the first of a series of feature-length cartoons from Dreamworks which had a disappointing start with its first film, *Moose Hunt*, which took just \$45m in the US.

A Dreamworks spokesman said its animated films would be more serious than those from Disney: "There will be no anthropomorphic singing urns or any of that rubbish," he said. "There will also be no tie-ins with burger restaurants."

## Hero of post-war art dies, aged 89

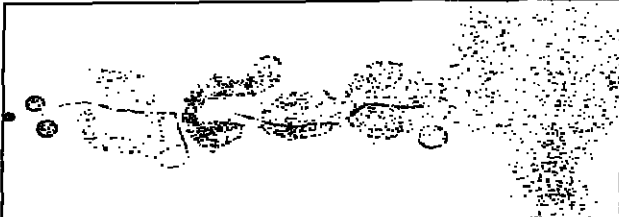
Victor Pasmore, one of the heroes of British post-war art, has died in Malta, aged 89.

His prints and paintings are familiar to any lover of abstract art. But he began in the tradition of painters like Bonnard and Sickert, and his death slices away one of the last connections with the pre-war Euston Road School, linked in turn to the great post-impressionist revolution.

After the Second World War, Pasmore broke with figurative painting and turned to free, luminous abstract work. His linking of soft, often blue and green masses with wiry lines

and beautifully balanced circles of intense colour recalls the liberated and joyful work of Matisse. He was a Companion of Honour, his work is in many important public collections and in recent years his prints and paintings have been one of the delights at the Royal Academy's summer exhibitions.

But his relations with official art and the general public have not always been easy. From his post as Master of Painting at Durham University in 1958 he thundered: "The decadent art is in the Royal Academy. There always have been charlatans in art ... In the junk shops there



Abstract master: Pasmore's Senza Titolo 8 (1989)

must be five done in the traditional style for every rubbishy modern picture produced."

His Apollo Pavilion, an abstract concrete structure in Peterlee, Co Durham, provoked a battle between English Her-

itage, which wanted to list it as an internationally important masterpiece, and local people, who described it as a "slimy old bridge" and wanted it demolished.

— Andrew Marr

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PensionStore	\$66,129	\$177,021
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The figures show the projected maturity value generated by a person contributing £200 per month gross, based on a male retiring at 65 with an annual investment return of 9%.

\*Source: Money Management magazine survey, October 1997

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Bertie Ahern, the Irish Prime Minister, lays a wreath yesterday at the Bloody Sunday memorial in Londonderry's Bogside. Photograph: Brian Little/PA

## Hopes rise in Ulster as UDA pledges end to wave of killings

Tensions in Belfast eased yesterday with an Ulster Defence Association statement that its wave of killings had ended. But as David McKerr, Ireland Correspondent, reports, a further shooting dashed hopes that the gunfire had ended.

The UDA's declaration, issued under its non-de-guerre of "Ulster Freedom Fighters", brought a palpable wave of relief to Northern Ireland following the fears generated by the eight violent deaths since

Christmas. But a subsequent shooting at Ardoyne, in north Belfast, dispelled hopes that the current crisis was subsiding. A man, thought to be a Catholic, was taken to hospital with a gunshot wound to the head. At the time of the incident he was working with a mechanical digger helping to lay gas pipes near a Loyalist area.

In its statement the UDA blamed the two killings of loyalists by the INLA for its wave of violence. Since New Year's Eve it has killed three Catholic men and injured a number of others.

The UDA said it had been responding to republican aggression. "The current phase of republican aggression by the INLA made a measured military response unavoidable. That response is now concluded."

But although the loyalist threat diminished with the UDA announcement it has by no means disappeared since another dangerous group, the Loyalist Volunteer Force, remains active. This organisation has accounted for three recent killings of Catholics.

The RUC yesterday moved against both UDA and LVF suspects with a series of raids, arrests and searches in Belfast and the Portadown area of Co Armagh. Last night a total of 13 men were in custody.

In another highly ominous development police yesterday recovered a large amount of powerful explosives from a vacant house in the loyalist Shankill Road area of Belfast. Police and troops found 100lb of powerful commercial explosives, which represents enough

material for up to a dozen substantial bombs.

All the recent loyalist killings have taken the form of shootings. Loyalists were believed to have only limited amounts of explosives at their disposal: if it proves they retain other substantial amounts, then at some future stage attacks on targets such as Catholic bars, with the potential of large-scale loss of life, cannot be ruled out.

In recent evenings the number of people going to bars in Catholic districts of Belfast has dropped dramatically.

The recent UDA killing spree raised the question of whether the organisation had simply reverted to straight militarism, and did not care whether its political representatives, the Ulster Democratic party, would be expelled from the Stormont multi-party talks.

Yesterday's statement will be seen as supporting the alternative theory that the UDA was engaged in a finite bout of retaliation for the INLA's killings of loyalist figures Billy Wright and Jim Guiney. The statement, assuming it is adhered to, will ease pressure to have the UDA ejected from the talks.

There is already speculation that the UDP may have played a valuable role in persuading the UDA militants to stop the killing.

In Londonderry the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, laid a wreath at the Bloody Sunday memorial in the Bogside district. He maintained the Irish government's pressure on Tony Blair by calling again for "a full independent inquiry" into the 1972 incident.

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## Watch firm advert accused exploiting anorexia

Watchmaker Accurat has been accused of exploiting anorexia in its latest advertising campaign and is being investigated by the advertising industry's watchdog.

Almost 80 people have complained to the Advertising Standards Authority about an advert which features an emaciated model wearing a watch on her upper arm under the slogan "Put some weight on". The ASA has asked Accurat to respond to complaints that the use of the model is an offensive and light-hearted treatment of eating disorders. "We're investigating it on the grounds that it might be distressing and upsetting to people with eating disorders," said an ASA spokesman. Relatively few complaints were made about the advert when it first appeared in women's fashion magazines.

Nicky Bryant, chief executive of the Eating Disorders Association, said the association had complained about the advertisement because deliberately provocative campaigns using the weight of models to promote products were "unhelpful at the very least", and could be harmful to people concerned about their weight.

The ASA is expected to deliver its verdict on the adverts in the next few weeks.

An spokesman for Accurat said the company had also received complaints from people about the advertisement, which is no longer running.

## Cod-liver oil health fears

A healthfood chain yesterday took bottles of own-brand cod-liver oil off its shelves amid fears that the vitamin supplement contains industrial toxins. Holland & Barrett said it will re-label all its own-brand cod-liver oil, deleting dosage instructions for children under five. The move follows warnings that minute traces of industrial toxins have been found in the product. Government scientists said the levels were "undesirably high" for under-fives, but insisted there was no health risk.

Manufacturers have volunteered to delete instructions for feeding the old-fashioned children's diet supplement to under-fives. Holland & Barrett said it was speeding up the process on its own brand bottles by taking them off the shelves and either putting the bottles in new packaging or sticking new labels on the packets.

## Mother in court outburst

A mother was led screaming from court yesterday after a man was jailed for three years for shaking her two-year-old daughter to death. Peter Ford, 40, was babysitting while Dawn Allen, 23, was attending a family funeral, Nottingham Crown Court heard. He pleaded guilty to the manslaughter of her daughter, Juniaun, on 23 August 1996.

The court heard that he was of low intelligence and had substantial difficulties. Mr Justice Astill told him: "I am satisfied your lack of judgement in using that degree of force was brought about by your disadvantages. You used a great deal of force simply because you thought she was misbehaving." But Ms Allen, from Nottingham, screamed from the public gallery as the sentence was passed: "You've got to be joking." As she was led out, she shouted at Ford: "You want life, you killed my daughter."

## Correction: Robert Fleming Holdings

In an article yesterday we incorrectly stated that Sir Robin Renwick, a director of Robert Fleming Holdings, was made a life peer by John Major following a considerable donation by the company to the Conservative Party. We are pleased to point out that Sir Robin was appointed a life peer by the Prime Minister, Tony Blair. His colleague, Lawrence Banks was awarded a CBE by Labour, not by the Conservatives, as incorrectly stated.



## Oestrogen may be culprit in puzzle over PMT

Pre-menstrual tension is not all in the mind, but neither is it caused by high levels of sex hormones. Jeremy Laurance, health editor, says new findings about the puzzling syndrome could point the way to improved treatments.

The female hormone, oestrogen, may make some women ill, researchers have found. Although it has never before been seriously considered as a hormone with negative mood effects, there is now sufficient evidence to suggest it may be a cause of PMT. Millions of women suffer symptoms including depression, irritability and feelings of bloatedness up to two weeks before their periods. In one in 40, symptoms are severe enough to prevent sufferers going to work.

Many doctors were unsympathetic, labelling badly affected women as whingers. Part of the reason came from studies which failed to show any excess level of hormones in sufferers. Support for their view also appeared to come from studies which showed the most effective treatment for PMT was anti-depressants. Over 70 per cent of women with severe symptoms get better when treated with Prozac. But a study has shown the hormones oestrogen and progesterone are at least as important as the central neurotransmitters (brain chemicals) targeted by Prozac in producing the symptoms.



Roseanne Barr, who makes great play of suffering from PMT in her American television sitcom *Roseanne*

Photograph: London Features International

Researchers at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, studied 20 women with severe PMT who were compared with 15 normal women. In the first part of the study, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, half the women with PMT were given a drug to suppress their ovaries. Their symptoms eased. They were then given, separately, synthetic progesterone and oestrogen. With the addition of each hormone, their symptoms returned. The remaining women with PMT and the normal women, who were treated with a placebo, did not experience a change in symptoms.

The most striking finding is that manipulation of the hormones had a dramatic effect on the PMT sufferers but none on the "normal" women. Blood tests showed hormone levels were the same in both groups. This suggests PMT is the result of a heightened sensitivity to the normal hormonal changes accompanying menstruation and is not caused by excessive levels of hormones.

In an editorial in the journal, Joseph Mortola, of Cook County Hospital, Chicago, says PMT is "probably the result of a complex interaction between ovarian steroids [hormones] and central neurotransmitters."

He says the finding that giving progesterone caused the return of symptoms in PMT sufferers who had had their ovaries suppressed could have been expected from other studies but the finding that oestrogen had the same effect was surprising. The paradox is that most women with PMT report easing of their symptoms during the early follicular phase of the menstrual cycle when oestrogen levels are at their highest. If oestrogen is proved to play a part in development of the syndrome, "it could prompt the development of entirely new treatment strategies based on drugs or hormones with anti-oestrogenic properties".

## Dental checks for child abuse

Dentists have been given guidelines on how to spot the signs of physical abuse in children through mouth and facial injuries.

According to research published today in the *British Dental Journal*, approximately 50 per cent of cases of child abuse involve injuries to the face or mouth. Bruises are the most common form of injury to the face in child abuse cases.

Today Richard Welbury, from Newcastle Dental Hospital, and Michael Murphy, from North Tyneside Child Protection Unit, published a list of seven "pointers" which may suggest abuse:

- The story of an "accident" being "vague", varying with each telling and from person to person;
- The child saying something about an injury which is inconsistent with the parents' explanation;
- The account of what happened not being compatible with the injury observed;
- Delay in seeking medical help, if at all;
- The parents' mood is abnormal and may be more concerned than necessary with their own problems;
- Parents' behaviour gives cause for concern, for example they may become hostile and rebut allegations that have not been made; and
- The child's appearance and interaction with parents are abnormal.

## Call for urgent screening to halt rise in infertility disease

Urgent measures to halt a rapidly-spreading infectious disease that is responsible for up to one third of cases of infertility are to be considered by the Government's chief medical officer next week. Jeremy Laurance, Health Editor, reports.

An expert advisory group appointed by the Government last year has recommended that women under 25 should be screened for the sexually transmitted disease chlamydia, which affects up to one in five sexually active women in that age group.

Chlamydia is the commonest STD in Europe. It has been described as a silent epidemic because it is often impossible to detect until it is too late, resulting in infection causing irreversible damage to the reproductive tract. If identified at an early stage, the disease can be easily cured with a single dose of antibiotics.

In Europe, screening is commonplace and has led to a sharp fall in the incidence of infertility. Cases of pelvic inflammatory disease have risen by 50 per cent in Britain in the past 10 years - from 470 to 700 per 100,000 women at risk.

The recommendations of the expert group, chaired by Professor Allan Templeton, of Aberdeen University, will be considered by the National Screening Committee, chaired by Sir Kenneth Calman, the Government's chief medical officer, this week.

Yesterday, Professor Templeton said: "We looked at a variety of screening methods and we are recommending opportunistic screening should be introduced." Previously, Professor Templeton has said Britain had one of the best health services in the world but was "like Latvia" on chlamydia screening.

Chlamydia is normally symptomless in women until it ascends the reproductive tract to the fallopian tubes, causing pelvic inflammatory disease. This can result in permanent damage to the tubes, leading to infertility and ectopic pregnancy. Chlamydia also affects men, causing non-specific urethritis. In Britain, studies show that between 3-10 per cent of women attending family planning clinics carry the micro-organism but the proportion rises to more than 20 per cent among those seeking abortion.

Opportunistic screening means that women would be tested only when they consulted the doctor for other reasons. The test, which can be conducted on a urine sample, costs £4-6 which the expert group says would be re-couped in savings on later treatment. A spokeswoman for the health department said that ministers would be considering the report in the light of advice from the National Screening Committee.

## MoD launches website for sick Gulf War veterans

The Government yesterday launched a new Internet service for victims of Gulf War illnesses. Ian Burrell reports that the move is partly a response to serious problems with official studies into the causes of the sickness.

Dr John Reid, the armed forces minister, promised yesterday that "every piece of information that is revealed to me" will be released to the sick veterans on the new website, which went on line last night.

The minister is anxious to send a message to the veterans that the Ministry of Defence is doing everything it can to try and identify the cause of the illnesses as quickly as possible. He added: "What I cannot do is play God and just invent a cause when there is no known cause."

The new Gulf Veterans' Illnesses website is an attempt to rid the MoD of accusations that it is involved in a cover-up. It will offer details of the

MoD's medical assessment programme and reports on the various pieces of research which have been commissioned into the many possible causes of the illness, including vaccines, pesticide sprays and chemical weapons.

But behind the launch of the site lies a serious problem. Dr Reid admitted yesterday that researchers involved in major epidemiological studies into the prevalence of the illnesses are having great difficulty in getting sufficient numbers of veterans to take part.

The minister said: "[The problems] are serious. There are difficulties with us getting names and addresses." He added that as a result of the problems the studies had fallen behind with their schedules.

Two British funded epidemiological studies are being carried out by the University of Manchester and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

The Manchester team aims to contact 10,000 veterans and the London study is seeking responses from all 53,000 who served in the campaign, of which 25,000 are still in the services.

The researchers are sending out 5,000 letters a fortnight in an effort to get a greater response.

An American-funded epidemiological study is being carried out at King's College School of Medicine in London. Veterans' groups had warned that many would not co-operate with the research when it was announced in 1996.

Last weekend, a contingent of veterans marched on the MoD to hand back their campaign medals in a protest that too little was being done to help their plight.

Dr Reid said that he was saddened by the protest but could not agree to calls made by MPs for a no-fault compensation scheme to be set up paying each sick veteran a fixed amount.

He said: "To do so would be grossly unfair to everyone else who has served their country and then become ill without knowing the cause of the illness."

The Web address is [www.mod.uk/gulfwar/gvi.htm](http://www.mod.uk/gulfwar/gvi.htm).

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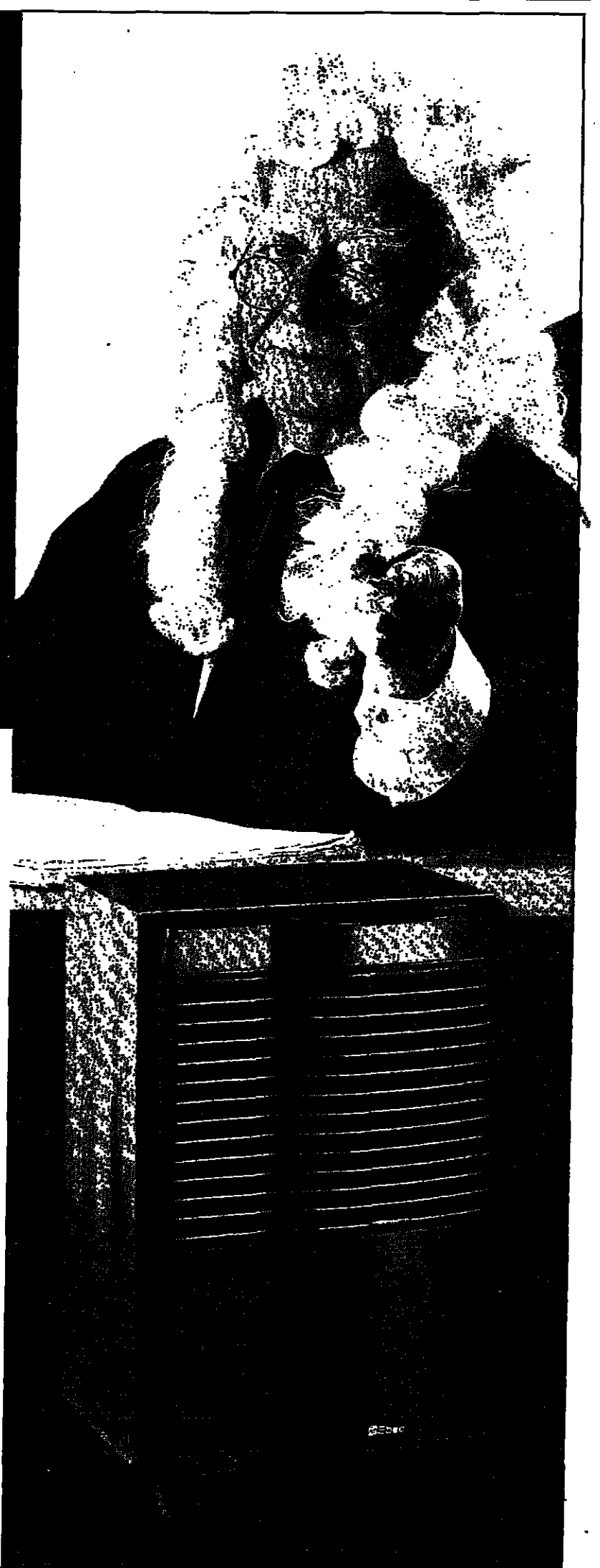


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# 7/MINERS

THE INDEPENDENT  
SATURDAY 29 NOVEMBER 1997

## Pitmen win historic court victory for damage to health

The Government yesterday moved quickly to begin negotiations on compensation claims of up to £1bn which could now be due to coal miners suffering from chest diseases. *Bonnie Clement*, Labour Editor, reports on a High Court decision expected to lead to the biggest compensation payout by a single employer.

Up to 100,000 former pitmen could now be in line for compensation following a ruling that the old nationalised coal industry was negligent and liable for the ill-health of underground workers.

In a particularly controversial passage of his judgment, Mr Justice Turner said that managers had frequently falsified the measurement of coal dust in working areas so that production was not impaired.

While individuals could eventually receive tens of thousands of pounds each for "shock, pain and suffering", some union officials said the payouts are likely to be "puny" when compared with the kind of compensation enjoyed in other employment cases. One female lo-



Beating the odds: Glyn Jones (left), 77, was one of the successful claimants demanding compensation for health damaged by mining. Photograph: Topham Picturepoint



cal authority official was recently awarded more than £230,000 for "hurt feelings" and in aggravated damages after a sex-discrimination case. Many of the former miners have had their lives blighted by crippling diseases for years, the unions pointed out yesterday.

The level of payment to former pitmen will clearly depend on their age, the degree of incapacity they have suffered and whether they are capable of earning a living. Some sources said the payouts were likely to vary between £2,000 and £60,000.

Mr Justice Turner will hear evidence on 6 February about claims for loss of earnings, medical care and costs.

Union officials and solicitors immediately warned former miners that "all sorts of vultures" were descending on their

communities offering advice in return for a percentage of the compensation. Special help lines have been set up by solicitors.

Tom Jones, of solicitors Thompsons, which represented one of the six men who were successful in the test case, said the rul-

ing would lead to the highest ever compensation bill for a single British employer. While British Coal would have been liable before it was wound up, the bill was now the responsibility of the Government.

Mr Jones pointed out that the state had received £1bn from the sale of British Coal land and had recently raked in £770m from a surplus in the industry's pension fund. "This massive judgment brings hope to tens of thousands of miners who have had their health destroyed by the negligence of British Coal," he said, adding that Thompsons has some 3,000 cases in the pipeline.

The solicitor accused senior coal industry managers of putting production before the health of miners. "There are some at the top levels of British Coal who should hang their heads in shame at this judgment," Mr Jones said.

Former miners will now be seeking medical evidence to back up claims, while officials are likely to argue that some of the illnesses may be due to other causes such as cigarette smoking. Any underground worker who was employed in the industry since it was nationalised in 1947 is covered by yesterday's judgment.

The first hearings began in October 1996 and the case ran for most of last year.

## Justice achieved against huge odds

Emotion was never far away at Merthyr Tydfil yesterday. Flanked by lawyers and officials of the National Association of Colliery Overseers, Deputies and Shot-Firers, two of the successful claimants, Glyn Jones and Connie Wells, acted with great dignity.

Mrs Wells's husband, Sam, died on 10 August 1994 - his 71st birthday. She replaced him in the legal action begun five years earlier.

"Sam would have been proud to have been here today. I was very glad to take over and I'm happy at the outcome. It means a lot for the thousands of miners who suffered from dust diseases."

Mr Wells had worked at collieries near his Maesteg home from 1938 to 1979, when emphysema and pneumoconiosis forced him to retire.

Shortly before his death he bought a new car which Mrs Wells decorated with ribbons and put in the garage. Mr Wells never saw it because he was too ill to walk the few yards to the garage.

Handicapped by long exposure to colliery dust, Mr Jones, 77, and smartly dressed in a grey suit, spoke slowly: "No amount of money will give someone back their health. But this judgment in London will assist sufferers and widows."

"All heavy industry has gone

but behind the new face in the Valleys there's immense suffering," he said.

An oxygen bottle is always carried in Mr Jones's car and one is always on hand at his house in Clive Terrace, Ynysybwl, where he lives with his wife of 49 years, Kitty.

He said: "Life with these conditions can be frightening. I could be using my nebuliser upstairs at 11 at night."

"But things might be so bad that I would have to be taken by ambulance to the East Glamorgan hospital a few miles away."

Peter Evans, a solicitor and partner in Hugh James, the firm handling some of the compensation cases, described the judge's ruling as "a damning indictment of British Coal at all levels and throughout its entire history."

He said British Coal was the largest employer in Western Europe immediately after the end of the Second World War.

"There will be thousands of similar claims, with a bill for compensation of around £1bn."

As Mrs Wells and Mr Jones walked slowly to cars waiting to drive them home, pride rather than pounds was on show.

Justice, they said, was at last being achieved against the most formidable odds.

— Tony Heath

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# 8/ZEPPELINS

## Hindenburg veteran witnesses airship's new beginning



Maiden journey: A German crowd watching the first flight of a Zeppelin NT for more than 50 years (Photograph: Bernard Bisson/Sygnia). Right: The Hindenburg turns into a fireball as it is about to land in the United States 61 years ago



A strange cigar-shaped object has been spotted over Friedrichshafen, the town where Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin first took to the air 98 years ago. Imre Karacs investigates.

In a cavernous hall on the edge of Lake Constance, the monster stirs. At the flick of a switch, the instrument panel begins to glow, a dark screens flicker with incomprehensible charts, and pumps whirr noisily into life. The dinosaur imprisoned in this Jurassic Park of extinct technology strains at its leash.

The Zeppelin, amazingly, is back. By the standards of its famous predecessors, the model currently undergoing air-worthiness trials is a midget. The Zeppelin NT - the initials stand for "New Technology" - is a mere 246 feet in length. The Hindenburg, consumed in a ball of fire as it came into land in New Jersey 61 years ago, was three times as long.

The ill-fated Zeppelin was also taller, heavier, and carried more passengers in infinitely greater luxury than its offspring ever will. There is no room in the gondola today for the Hindenburg's restaurant, piano and individual cabins. There is just about enough space for the pilot and

### SCI-FI WRITERS WAX LYRICAL OVER A FUTURE WORLD OF BLIMPS

Airships had not been invented in Elizabethan England. Nor in the early stages of the nineteenth century. This is the only way to explain the cruel neglect Zeppelins have suffered at the hands of Shakespeare and Dickens. Thankfully for blimp enthusiasts, many modern writers have built their narratives around the phenomenon of gaseous ellipses flying through our skies, with varying degrees of success.

The publication of George Griffiths' *The Angel of the Revolution* in 1893 marked an im-

portant watershed in the development of science-fiction, and used blimps to evoke a future-worldliness. By the late 1970s a loving pastiche of this sort of writing had appeared, most notably by Michael Moorcock, whose *The Warlord of the Air*, forming a part of the Bastable trilogy, gave the airships a pivotal role in holding together a British empire that had avoided the fate of the historical one.

Perhaps the most successful since then, was Philip Pullman's *Northern Lights*. Published as the first part of a children's trilogy in 1996,

it has been translated into 17 languages. It is set in an alternative universe, where people use airships rather than we might use trains or aeroplanes. Having spent the best part of a year in the top five of the US children's sales list, it has managed to balance commercial advance with critical acclaim, winning the Carnegie medal and a *Guardian* fiction award.

Michael M. Mooney's *The Hindenburg* was published in 1974. Later filmed with George C. Scott and Anne Bancroft, Mooney's novel suggests the reason for the

Hindenburg's explosion was sabotage, by anti-Nazi forces in pre-war Germany.

In 1981, John Brosnan produced the epic *Skyship*. This tale of modern technology sees a huge blimp - *The Phoenix* - running on a nuclear-powered generator. More recent is Pamela Oldfield's *Falling From Grace*, published in 1995, which concerns a budding romance within the design-and-build team on the R-101; Britain's answer to von Zeppelin's beast that went on to meet a similar fate.

— Gidon Freeman

co-pilot, plus leather armchairs for 12 passengers. The manufacturers are also trying to squeeze in a lavatory and tiny kitchen.

But size isn't everything. Who would have predicted after 1937 that rigid-frame airships would ever be built? The Hindenburg disaster and the arrival of the aeroplane appeared to have put an end to this kind of aircraft, deemed even more dangerous than hot-air balloons. The company founded by the count in Friedrichshafen, shut down the production lines overnight and turned its attention to gearboxes and military technology. What remained of the

original hangar and the town itself was eventually flattened by the RAF.

"There was no interest in this kind of nostalgia after the war," said the Zeppelin group's president, Max Mugler. Zeppelins became the stuff of science-fiction writers: flights of fancy for UFO-lovers and hobby-horses for adherents of the "Lighter than Air" fraternity.

In the past decade, however, the faded turned serious. Research of German archives and an upswing in interest in environmentally friendly transport revealed that Zeppelins, if anything, had been

ahead of their time. "Many people came to us, asking for money," Mr Mugler says. "In the end we decided to do it ourselves."

In 1993, the Zeppelin group, a company with an annual turnover of DM10bn (£5.5bn), took a leap into the past. The airship subsidiary was revived, "air-head" technicians were hired, and research began anew. The count's last surviving granddaughter chipped in with several million marks. Although no longer in family hands, another von Zeppelin, distant relative Wolfgang, is one of the new subsidiary's managers. The prototype was completed last sum-

mer. On 18 September, the new Zeppelin soared into the sky for the first time, flew over a lake, and landed safely after a short journey in front of 30,000 people - more than half the town's population. Among the crowd stood the frail figure of 93-year-old Josef Braun, wearing his 1937 Hindenburg uniform. He declared himself happy to have witnessed "the Zeppelin airship's new beginning".

There have so far been four test flights; a fifth is planned for the end of next week. If it obtains the necessary safety certificate, production is expected to begin in the autumn. Five, costing DM12.5m each, have

been ordered so far. Apart from the shape, the new Zeppelin has little in common, of course, with the first generation. Inflammable hydrogen gas has been replaced with inert helium. The aircraft is powered by three swivelling propellers, which are co-ordinated from the space-age cockpit by sophisticated computer systems. There is no need for ballast because the propellers alone are able to lift the lightweight frame or bring it to land softly. The skeleton is made up of tough aluminium and carbon composite, while the envelope uses synthetic materials not available to the count. "It is 100 per cent safe," Mr Mugler asserts.

The first few are likely to be used for tourism: day trips over the Alps at the leisurely pace of 80mph. Other possible applications include atmospheric research and surveillance, for instance of national borders, fishing zones and pipelines.

The Zeppelin company has no immediate plans to build Hindenburg-sized behemoths, but another German firm is toying with the idea. Cargolifter, a Berlin-based company backed by Siemens and Asea Brown Boveri, unveiled plans this week to build giant airships that could transport massive loads. The prototype of this "floating crane" should be ready by 2000, exactly 100 years after von Zeppelin's pioneering flight. Look out for cigar-shaped objects overhead.



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# 9/IN THE COURTS

THE INDEPENDENT  
SATURDAY 24 JANUARY 1998

## GTech chief to quit lottery job if he loses bribery case



Guy Snowden: Suing Richard Branson over claims he offered him a bribe

Photograph: National Pictures

**'I don't care if Branson gives money to charity or burns it'**



Branson: Counter-suing over claims he lied about the bribery claim

Photograph: Tom Pilsdon

Guy Snowden, chief executive of the US lottery company GTech, said yesterday that if the jury found that he had offered a bribe to Richard Branson, he would resign his directorship of Camelot, which runs the National Lottery. Rosa Prince was in the High Court to hear the argument.

In a day of heated exchanges in the courtroom, the chief executive of GTech, which owns a 22 per cent share in Camelot, continued to deny he had offered Richard Branson a bribe at a lunch in September 1993 to pull out of the bidding to run the National Lottery.

Guy Snowden, whose British partners in Camelot were to be De La Rue, Racal, ICL, and Cadbury-Schweppes, said he was aware of Mr Branson as a "very famous man" before the entrepreneur issued the invitation to lunch.

Two days before the meeting, Mr Branson had telephoned Mr Snowden and told him he was going to enter a bid, and that he was aware of GTech's expertise, and wanted it to be part of his plans. Mr Snowden said he was already committed to a consortium but the two men talked about Mr Branson's plans to give all the operator profits to charity, and the percentages in-

volvement. Mr Snowden said he was happy to meet to explore potential business possibilities.

When asked by his barrister, Richard Ferguson QC, if he remembered saying the words: "In what way can we help you, Richard?" he replied: "I do not recall those at all. The only thing I said was, 'What can we do together?'"

Mr Ferguson asked if he remembered saying: "I mean, what can I do for you personally?" Mr Snowden replied: "In no way did I ever say personally."

Mr Snowden was asked by George Carman QC, on behalf of Richard Branson, if he could see any circumstances in which it would be proper to stay on as a director of Camelot if the jury found he had attempted to bribe Mr Branson. "I think it would be unlikely," he said.

Mr Branson is being sued for libel over allegations he made in a *Panorama* programme in 1995 that he was offered a bribe by Mr Snowden to withdraw his bid to run the lottery.

The Virgin chief is in turn suing GTech and Mr Snowden for libel after they said the bribe allegation was untrue.

As one of the largest individual shareholders in GTech, Mr Snowden told the court he held £30m capital. In addition, he received £3m earnings in 1997 from GTech, two and a half times his earnings in 1993.

When asked by Mr Carman why his salary had increased by so much, he said: "Because I deserved it."

The National Lottery has a

turnover of around £100m a week, of which Camelot takes 10 per cent. Mr Carman said: "All in all, GTech has done quite nicely out of the National Lottery in terms of profit."

"Certainly," Mr Snowden

replied. He agreed that GTech had "three bites of the cherry", in the lottery: the company's share in Camelot, supplying the machinery to retailers and supplying another company with parts for the machines.

Mr Snowden agreed that the profits of most lotteries in the rest of the world go to charity. When asked if that wasn't what Mr Branson had wanted to do, he said: "I've got shareholders that have to be looked

after. If Mr Branson wants to give to charity or burn it, it doesn't matter to me."

Mr Snowden said there would have been no need to bribe Mr Branson as he did not see him as a threat. "I had a lot

of other competitors ... I wouldn't have ranked him [Mr Branson] very high, based on the degree of preparation he had undertaken at that time."

Mr Snowden described his humiliation when he saw the

*Panorama* programme containing Mr Branson's allegations. "It was extremely unfair," he said. "To actually see it on a broadcast was humiliating. I felt pursued and very uncomfortable."

## Murder charge man claims lover fell in her bath

The man accused of the murder of one woman and the attempted murder of another told a court yesterday that he saw someone running from the house in which a prostitute had been left beaten, and that two months later his lover apparently fell in her bath and drowned.

A man accused of attempting to murder a prostitute told a court yesterday that he found her slumped in the kitchen of her home after seeing a man leaving the house.

Victor Farrant, 48, said he panicked when he saw the man returning, and he dashed out of the house.

He denies the attempted murder of the prostitute, Ann Fidler, who was found at home at Eastleigh, Hampshire, in December 1995.

He also denies the murder of accountant Glenda Hoskins, 45, whose body was found in the attic of her waterside home at Portsmouth on 7 February 1996.

Mr Farrant said he had paid an earlier visit to Mrs Fidler after seeing an advert in the name of "Alex", and on 27 December 1995, while out job-hunting, he had decided to see her again.

When he knocked, there was no reply and he assumed she was seeing a customer. He hung around and saw someone come out of the house and then knocked on the door. He could see something in the kitchen and went in there. "There was a mess on the floor. I can remember glass, I could hear it crunching under my feet, there

was blood on the floor. I was very shocked," he said.

He told Winchester Crown Court that in the kitchen he kicked a bag of tools he had been carrying whilst looking for work on building sites and realised he must have put the bag down when he knelt by Mrs Fidler.

He picked up several of the tools, bits of glass, and an iron casing. "I knew I had touched some things when I cleared the debris. I didn't know exactly what I had touched, so I just basically grabbed everything within arm's reach," he said.

Earlier yesterday, he told the court of his sexual relationship with Mrs Hoskins, who is survived by a husband, from whom she was separated, and three children. He said he had met her in August 1993 and said their sexual relationship was "very active".

On 7 February, 1996, Mrs Hoskins had taken two children to school and when she returned home he had gone in and they started having sex. Afterwards, he said, they had a bath and then got out and dried themselves.

He walked out of the bathroom and could not see anything but heard a crash and the sound of splashing water.

He went into the bedroom and got dressed and thought Mrs Hoskins was giving him the silent treatment. He returned to the bathroom and found her lying in the bath on her back. He pulled her out and tried to give her mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, but was not able to revive her or get a pulse.

He later decided to hide Mrs Hoskins in the attic. There was a carpet there. "I wanted to cover her up so I just lifted the carpet over," he said.

The case continues.

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## Political crusader humbled by the slings and arrows

Martin Bell MP, the former foreign correspondent, was under fire again yesterday over accusations that he failed to declare all his election expenses. Andrew Buncombe reports on the latest political flak flying around in Tatton.

Mr Bell, as usual in his trademark light suit, threw down the gauntlet and suggested he would resign if he discovered his electorate had lost confidence in him.

In a combative yet nervous performance, he told a packed press conference he was unaware that legal advice he had taken before the last election, costing £9,400, had been paid for by Labour and the Liberal Democrats.

"I fought an extraordinary campaign, it was not a campaign but a crusade. My whole campaign was run by volunteers," he said. "I really thought it was free. Everything was free."

"If I was innocent (in thinking it came free), I don't think being politically innocent is an indictable offence. I guess I know rather more about politics now."

He added that he would be asking his constituents to write to him with their views. "If they have lost confidence in me - which I doubt - I will reconsider my position."

Mr Bell called the press conference after it was claimed that a £9,400 legal bill had not been declared in his election expenses. Inspection of the declaration shows this to be the case.

But Mr Bell, who was elected to the Tatton seat after Labour and Lib-Dems withdrew their candidates, said he had only become aware of the bill two days ago. He said there was no reason the money should have been declared as an



Shadowman: Martin Bell faces tough questioning at his press conference in Knutsford yesterday

Photograph: Phil Noble/Newstream

*'If voters have lost confidence in me, which I doubt, I will reconsider my position'*

"small storm in a small teacup". But Mr Hamilton said that while he was not looking to launch a legal challenge against Mr Bell, it would only take one complaint from a constituent to trigger an investigation.

Mr Bell said that, if there was to be a by-election, he would consider his position. Mr Hamilton said he would not stand. The Tatton Conservative Association said it would not consider either Mr Hamilton or his wife Christine as candidates.

The acting returning officer for the Borough of Macclesfield, Brian Longden, said any challenge to election expenses had to be made in a petition to the courts by a local voter or else a candidate. "It is outside the scope of the returning officer to carry out an investigation."

Joe Jacob, Law Professor at the London School of Economics, told the BBC: "I would be gobsmacked if Bell were held legally liable."

election expense, as he had not been an official candidate at the time.

"If I had not taken legal advice, I would have been blown out of the water," he said.

Mr Bell, who famously beat former Conservative MP Neil Hamilton by a majority of more than 11,000, took legal advice after Mr Hamilton threatened legal action over the former

BBC journalist's plan to describe himself on the ballot paper as an "anti-corruption" candidate. Mr Hamilton wrote to Mr Bell, claiming the description was defamatory.

Yesterday Mr Hamilton seized on the controversy and said Mr Bell should resign. "I think this exposes what we knew all along - that Mr Bell is a hypocritical fraud," he said. "He was

posing as an independent... but his campaign was managed by Labour spin doctors, his legal expenses were paid by them and none of this was revealed." He said he had not incurred any le-

gal fees, as he had written the letter himself.

Opinions at Westminster differed last night on whether the affair would blow over. Mr Bell himself described it as a

## I was a political innocent, says Bell, as former colleagues give him a grilling

"Even a war zone is easier than this" muttered a besieged Martin Bell as he sat down to face some hard questioning from former colleagues at a press conference in his cramped constituency office in Knutsford.

He was clearly nervous and uncomfortable in front of the massed ranks of cameras and lights, and his voice wavered at

times as answers were demanded to the questions about legal expenses of £9,400 paid by the Liberal Democrat and Labour parties during his general election campaign.

"I honestly did not know about them until two days ago" he said, with a pleading for understanding in his voice.

Mr Bell maintained that legal fees were normally declared

as campaign expenses and he asked why, as an independent MP, he should be singled out in this way.

No one else he argued, had been asked to declare their legal expenses. He was asked if Conservatives would have voted for him had they known Labour and the Liberal Democrats had paid his legal fees. He answered that people knew

that both of those parties had withdrawn their candidates in his favour.

"Who have I upset... I ask you to speculate... I didn't like this news. If I had known then I would have found a way of declaring it... The playing field is tilted against a citizen MP. If any good comes out of this it will be a reform of the electoral law."

The questioning became harder, he was almost shouted at by those who wanted to know how could he have been so naive to think legal advice would be free.

"If I was a political innocent... I am not so innocent now" he said. "I was not in the backroom I was out there campaigning."

A heavy document was thrust at him by a journalist who

said he had worked on the cash-for-questions scandal and that what he was handing to him was proof that Neil Hamilton had done no wrong. "I will look at it" whispered a rattled Mr Bell.

The MP wanted to take comfort in the support of his constituents. "I have only had one letter of complaint in eight months. That's not bad."

It was soon clear Mr Bell had had enough though. He said he believed a mountain was being made out of a molehill, or it was a storm in a teacup, and if he was still on the other side of the camera he would have told his news editor so.

Still, the same questions about his failure to declare the legal fees as campaign expenses kept coming, and

he muttered "We could go on up and down this all morning."

Soon he was on his feet but still stopping briefly to answer individual questions and to be interviewed outside for television in the late morning chill, with onlookers nodding their recognition of the man in the white suit.

— Esther Leach

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## Labour trips up over claim that Ffion travelled free

The Tories called on Tony Blair to give one of his spin doctors a dressing down last night for a 'scandalous smear' suggesting William Hague's wife, Ffion, had flown to Hong Kong at the taxpayers' expense. Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent, reports on red faces around No 10.

A senior party source close to No 10 was red faced last night after briefing journalists that William Hague's wife, Ffion, had gone to Hong Kong on free tickets, provided by the Government for the handover ceremony in the former colony.

The briefing was an attempt to deflect criticism of ministers for travelling with their partners or spouses at the taxpayers' expense. But it backfired when it turned out to be incorrect.

The Tories hit back by insisting that she had not gone at the taxpayers' expense, and Michael Howard, the shadow Foreign Secretary, demanded an apology in a letter to the Prime Minister attacking it as "a scandalous attempt to smear the Leader of the Opposition and his wife".

The gaffe came as Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, spearheaded the Government's attempt to draw a line under recent public relations disasters,

from cuts in single-parent benefits to reports of the rift between Gordon Brown and Tony Blair.

Mr Straw insisted it was not a relaunch. And it was not re-branding new Labour. He reminded disenchanted traditional Labour voters that the Government's support was based on a "new coalition". It was important to recognise that, he said. "New Labour won be-

cause it was able to appeal to a wide range of people - not just traditional Labour voters but many others who voted Labour for the first time in May."

Mr Straw, one of the leading modernisers in the Cabinet, asserted that Mr Blair's government was firmly based in the "radical centre" of British politics, and reached out beyond the traditional left-right divide.

"Where we can work together with other parties or with peo-

ple with no party political background, we will do so. We are not driven by dogma but by ideas and pragmatism."

Taking up Mr Blair's appeal to the Cabinet not to indulge in "departmentitis", he said: "Too few of us have been spelling out the larger picture."

Mr Blair gave the task of spearheading the Government's fight back to Mr Straw partly because he accounted for himself well during a difficult week at new year of speculation over his son's involvement with cannabis. The Tories claimed yesterday that he was also allocated the task to put Gordon Brown in his place. "Tony Blair is trying to take back control of his government's welfare policies from Gordon Brown and in an attempt to do so, he has briefed against Brown and promoted his ally Jack Straw," said Iain Duncan-Smith, the Tory spokesman on social security.

Mr Hague's Shadow Cabinet told at a strategy meeting this week that they have been hurting Labour by claims that ministers seem to be spending too much on themselves and their partners. As a result, the Tories have tabled dozens of questions about ministerial expenditure on their grace and favour flats and trips abroad with their spouses or partners.

The meeting was also told that Labour still had a long lead in the polls. Mr Hague is convening another strategy meeting next week to try to inflict more damage on Mr Blair.



William Hague's wife, Ffion: No free ticket

## Tory MPs too white and male

Today's Tory MPs come from a narrower group in society than they did 20 years ago, research carried out by a grassroots Conservative group revealed.

The Tory Reform Group said the "modernisation" of selection process in 1980 led to a decline in the number of new MPs educated in state schools and failed to raise the number of women MPs. The group wants "substantial reform to the system to end discrimination".

The TRG report said the selection procedure, which includes a course modelled on the British Army's officer selection course, itself lifted from the Nazi party method of selection, had "helped to distance MPs from ordinary Conservative voters". It states: "We cannot go on saying that we understand the working classes because we employ them as our servants."

## Blair pushes for elected mayors

Directly elected mayors could become powerful figures in town halls across the country, in spite of misgivings by councillors. Colin Brown says Tony Blair is backing the idea of elected local cabinets.

Tony Blair wants to see directly elected mayors in the main towns and cities of Britain as a means of reviving interest in local government, and reasserting local powers over local services.

Whitehall sources last night denied reports that the Government was considering compelling reluctant councils to join the Blair revolution for local government by forcing them to have elected mayors. But it is clearly a stick that is being kept in reserve.

"The emphasis is on a bottom-up approach to local government, not a top-down move. There are no plans at present to compel councillors to innovate in this area and ministers consider it unlikely they will need to do so," said the source.

The drive to introduce directly elected mayors is part of the reforms to local government that will be outlined in a consultation paper in the next few weeks.

voting system, possibly allowing voting on Sundays and in shopping centres or supermarkets to widen the appeal of local government democracy.

The plans coincide with a Bill in the House of Lords, which will give councils the power to experiment with elected mayors. The Bill has been introduced with the Government's backing by Lord Hunt of Tanworth, the cabinet secretary throughout the years of the last Labour government, from Heath to Thatcher.

Lord Hunt's Bill is expected to be given a fair wind in the Commons by the Government but the Tories are concerned about the lack of accountability for directly elected mayors with appointed cabinets. There could be as much resistance from Tories in the country as die-hard Labour councillors determined to hold on to their powers.

Few councillors may be willing to give up powers to directly elected mayors, and Mr Blair may have to resort at a later stage to compulsion. All large towns will be expected to follow the lead taken in London with the elected mayor for the capital.

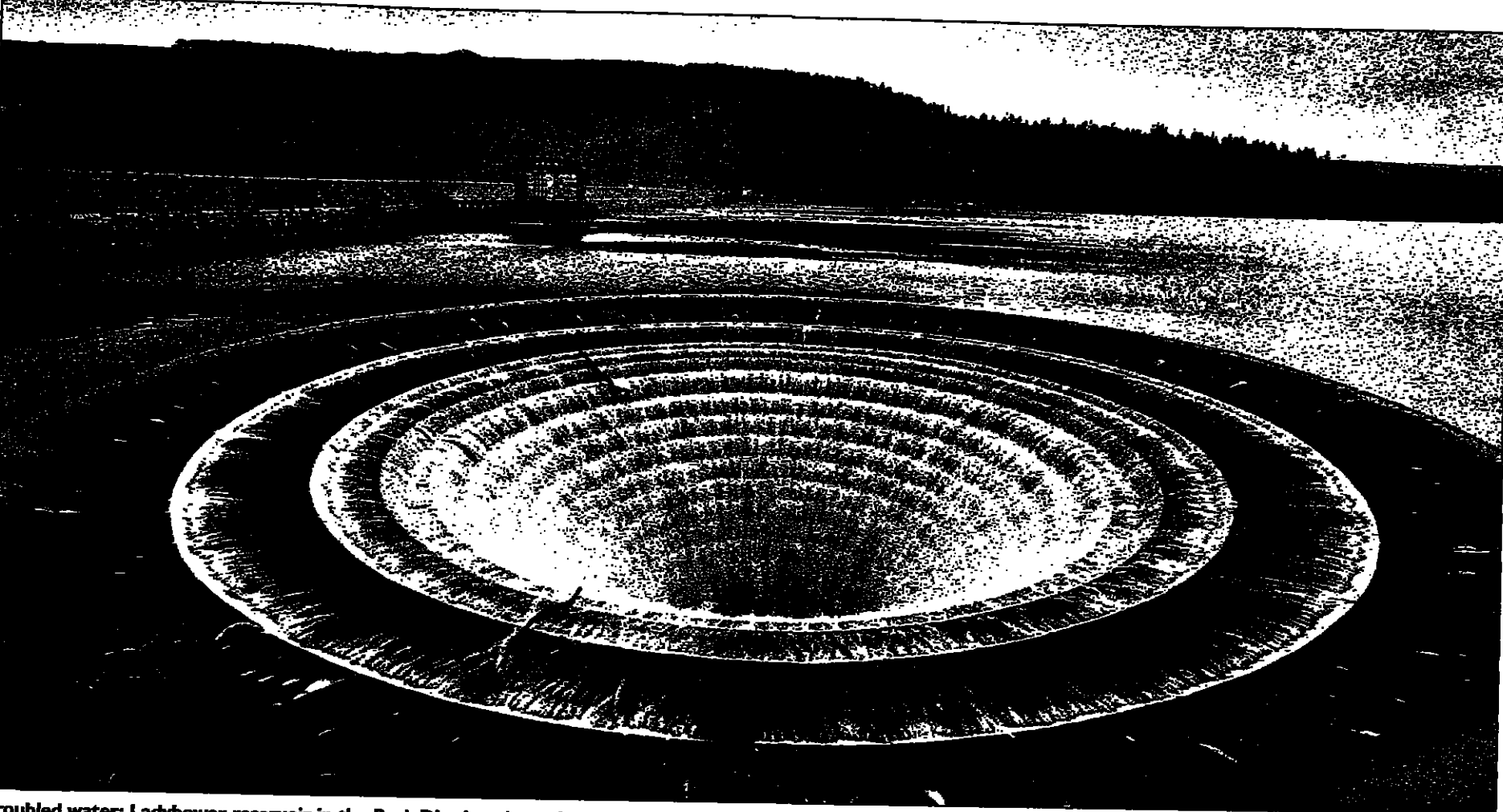
For the time being, the Prime Minister is keen to keep local government in support of his proposed reforms. Some will be disappointed at the Government's decision not to make radical changes to the business rate, which will continue to be controlled largely at national level, with the introduction of some scope for local variation.



# 11/ENVIRONMENT NEWS

THE INDEPENDENT  
SATURDAY 24 JANUARY 1998  
11

## Reservoir dogged by controversy as rebuilding threatens Peak landscape



Troubled water: Ladybower reservoir in the Peak District where the dam wall has to be raised, possibly using gritstone from Win Hill (background)

Photograph: Brian Harris

Plans to reinforce the Ladybower Dam, the largest earth dam in Britain, are causing consternation in the Peak District. Stephen Goodwin, Heritage Correspondent, reports.

Severn Trent Water are anxious to make a start reinforcing the massive earth embankment of the Ladybower Dam, holding back 6,300 million gallons of water in the Derwent Valley west of Sheffield.

The dam is due for a statutory inspection in April when the water company would expect to be told that in the interests of safety remedial work has to be carried out.

The dry summer of 1995 accelerated problems and Severn Trent decided not to wait until ordered to do the work and has submitted proposals to the National Park authority for work this year. The dam height will be raised by 3 metres and a 10m thick layer of crushed rock added to the vast embankment.

However there is concern about where the 400,000 tons of gritstone needed for the £4m job will be quarried and about

disruption for the hamlet of Yorkshire Bridge where the works compound would be.

Severn Trent want to create a new quarry on the flank of Win Hill—a prominent part of the panoramic view across the 500-acre reservoir from the A57 Snake Pass road. The quarry is on company land, but would be a major scar in the National Park where there is a policy against new excavations.

"Win Hill or Win Hole?" ask the conservationists and some Yorkshire Bridge residents who are opposing the scheme. "A feature of great natural beauty would be destroyed forever," said Anne Robinson, a local campaigner.

If the dam has to be strengthened, Ms Robinson would prefer the rock to be quarried from the shoreline of the reservoir or for it to be brought in by rail. This would require rebuilding an old track now used as a footpath but could, in the long term, alleviate some of the park's traffic problems.

There is also unease about Severn Trent's haste. The park authority is due to consider the planning applications next month, but conservationists want any decision deferred until after the statutory inspection.

## Prescott told to build more urban homes

A group of 69 Labour MPs yesterday fired a warning shot at John Prescott for allowing building in the green belt. Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent, reports that Tony Blair is facing a growing countryside alliance.

couched in diplomatic language, but it will be seen as a warning shot at John Prescott and his ministers at the Department of Environment over building in the green belt.

It was tabled by David Drew, the Labour MP for Stroud, and Paddy Tipping, the Labour MP for Sherwood, who have led backbench criticism of the threat to allow expansion of building in the green belt.

Mr Drew was one of the cross-party group of MPs, including Tom King, the former Northern Ireland Secretary, which held a meeting at the Commons this week to coordinate opposition.

Many of the other Labour MPs who signed the motion represent former Tory seats with rural areas which could be under threat, including Ivor Caplin, the MP for Hove in East Sussex; Diana Organ, Forest of Dean; Vernon Coaker, Gedling; and Ben Bradshaw, Exeter.

While praising past Labour Governments for creating the green belt, their motion highlighted the importance of "making the best possible use of brownfield sites and existing buildings to meet housing demand", and called for regional planning conferences to be given more power in decisions on land for housing.

Mr Prescott has given assurances that the national ratio of housing in towns and countryside in plans inherited from the Tories will remain broadly unchanged after his report to Parliament in the next few weeks.

But the review is expected to pave the way for 4.4 million new homes and his refusal to block green belt developments at Newcastle and Stevenage has set the countryside campaigners on course for a confrontation with the Government.

## Bellamy fury over green belt threat

A top wildlife campaigner yesterday condemned the "madness" of building millions of new homes in the green belt. Professor David Bellamy, called for a halt to the Government-backed plans that have sparked anger among environmentalists.

In a keynote speech he said new homes should be built on derelict "brown" land in urban locations. He told the Green Futures conference at Halesowen in the West Midlands: "The Government wants to provide 4 million new homes in the next 20 years, with half of them in rural lo-

cations. They could all be built on the 60,000 hectares of vacant "brown" land in towns and cities, with plenty of room available for green spaces. It is madness to destroy the green belt environment."

He added: "The brown sites are close to jobs, hospitals, shops and services. That is where most people want to live, not miles out in the countryside where cars are needed and water supplies barely sustain existing households."

The demand for homes has been created by the rising divorce rate and people living longer.

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# 12/JORDAN

Murders in Amman point to a new strategy by Saddam aiming at bypassing beleaguered King

## Jordan at risk of becoming cockpit for proxy wars

Is Jordan becoming like Lebanon in the past, a place where other Middle East powers fight proxy wars? Last weekend in the capital, Amman, a gang cut the throats of a senior Iraqi diplomat, two important businessmen, and five others. Patrick Cockburn explains why Jordan is becoming a more dangerous place.

It was as if the killers wanted to advertise their savagery. They cut the throats of each of their eight victims and then stabbed them through the heart.

"The stabbing was carried out by professional murderers," says Doctor Mounim al-Hadid, director of forensic medicine at the police department in Amman, after he looked at evidence from the autopsies.

There were other signs that this was not a crime carried out by ordinary criminals. The murderers showed great patience.

The forensic evidence proves that three hours passed between their first murder and the last as they waited for their victims to arrive. The last two to die, Hikmat al-Hajou, the Iraqi deputy ambassador to Jordan and his wife Laila, may have received a call on their mobile phone, luring them to the house where they were killed.

It began in the evening last Saturday. Sami George, 63, an Iraqi businessman along with

Diotisios Lidaki, 57, his Greek girlfriend, was holding an *iftar*, the meal which breaks the fast at the end of the day in Ramadan. But before the guests could arrive four or five men burst in, killing Mr George's Egyptian bodyguard and an Egyptian friend.

The men, speaking Arabic with an Iraqi accent, according to Ms Lidaki, who alone survived the evening, tied up and gagged their victims. Then they waited for Namir Ochi, another Iraqi businessman who lived in Lebanon and, like Sami George, with whom he often stayed, came from Kirkuk, in northern Iraq. He had the reputation of being comfortably off, but the wealthy member of his family was his London-based brother Nazmi, whose companies are worth some \$1.2 bn.

Ms Lidaki, who only lived because her throat was slashed rather than cut, and a knife missed her heart, said Mr Ochi and the killers "exchanged accusations and the Iraqis said he owed them large sums of money."

"Ochi refused their demands, so they stabbed him and attacked all those present."

Finally, just before the murderers departed, Hikmat al-Hajou, the Iraqi deputy ambassador, arrived, possibly summoned by a phone-call, and was killed along with his wife.

The crime, for which nobody has been arrested, sent shockwaves through Jordan. The professional ferocity of the killings and the fact that Namir Ochi was reported to owe money in Baghdad, argues that the



A pro-Saddam rally in Jordan during the Gulf war. King Hussein later broke with Iraq but not all his subjects backed him

Photograph: Rex Features

killers belonged to the Iraqi security forces. In 1986 Nasser, another Ochi brother, was executed in Baghdad for allegedly offering a bribe, showing that the family was unpopular with the regime.

But the killings have wider implications. Suddenly other Middle East powers feel free to pursue their enemies in Amman as they once did in Beirut. Last September Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, sent agents of Mossad, the Israeli foreign-intelligence service, to poison Khalid Meshal, a leader of Hamas, the militant Islamic group, in a street in Amman only a mile from where

Sami George was killed.

Jordan has always been one of the smaller players in power battles in the Middle East. Sandwiched between Iraq to the east and Israel to the west, Syria to the north and Saudi Arabia to the south, it is weaker than any of its neighbours. It was badly damaged by the Gulf War when it refused to join the anti-Iraq alliance. To return to favour in Washington it signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994 and broke with Iraq the following year when it gave refuge to General Hussein Kamel, the chief lieutenant of Saddam Hussein who had fled Baghdad.

King Hussein had no choice. He needed American protection and money. He wanted to rebuild relations with the Gulf Arabs. And, to a degree, his strategy has worked. The US gives aid worth \$225m a year. But the treaty with Israel and the break with Iraq were never popular with ordinary Jordanians. Neither policy has paid the dividends expected.

In December Saddam Hussein executed four Jordanian students who were under arrest for smuggling £500 worth of goods. His motive was apparently a warning to Jordan not to interfere in Iraqi internal affairs. General Wafiq al-Sammarai, the former head of Iraqi

military intelligence, says the Iraqi leader decided to kill the students because his security had intercepted a message from the Iraqi opposition in Jordan to General Talib al-Sadoun, a senior Iraqi general, in Baghdad.

Iraqi policy is becoming clear: cultivate Jordanian opinion but snub the King. Immediately after the killing of Sami George and the others in Amman, President Saddam announced he was releasing over 50 Jordanian prisoners in Iraq.

But he did so in a deliberately offensive manner. Ignoring repeated requests from King Hussein for their freedom he

promised their release instead to Leith Shbeilat, an important opposition figure.

So angered was the Jordanian government at Mr Shbeilat's success, after King Hussein was rebuffed, that they did everything to prevent him from returning in triumph. Journalists covering his arrival were roughed up by the police. Relatives of the prisoners were told to go home.

Sami George and his friends may have been killed because of a business deal gone wrong, but the manner of their death may point to a new ferocity in the way Iraq intends to deal with Jordan in future.

## Changing face of an old land

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was part of the Turkish Empire but after the Turkish defeat in the First World War the territory of Jordan became part of the short-lived Syrian Kingdom of King Faisal I (later King of Iraq).

In 1920 Faisal was defeated by the French, the Syrian mandate was given to France and the Emirate of Transjordan was incorporated into Britain's mandate of Palestine. King Abdullah, Faisal's brother, was chosen to rule in 1921. In 1928 a treaty with Britain made Transjordan a constitutional monarchy, until 1946, when a second treaty created the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan.

Transjordan opposed the partition of Palestine and joined the other Arab nations in fighting the new Israeli state in 1948. By the end of the war it occupied a section of West Bank designated by the UN for the Arabs. Its name was changed to Jordan in 1949, and in 1950 it formally annexed the West Bank territory. Abdullah was assassinated in 1951. His son Talal reigned for a year but stepped down in favour of his son Hussein I.

A split developed within Jordan over the Palestinian problem: the Jordanian government claimed sole guardianship of the Palestinian Arabs, offering Jordanian nationality to any Palestinians in 1960; but this claim was disputed by the militant refugees, who established in 1964 the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Threats from these militants induced the King to accept the risk of war in 1967, although the fighting cost Jordan the West Bank.

Jordan renounced its West Bank claims at a 1974 Arab summit when it signed the Rabat resolution, which declared the PLO sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians. In 1988 Jordan announced that it was officially severing all legal and administrative ties to the West Bank and surrendering its claim to the PLO.

— Fiona Bell

TOMORROW IN THE SEVEN-SECTION

## INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



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# 13/CLINTON ACCUSED

## Dirty crack brigade has a field day as Zippergate transfixes an entire nation

For a while it had seemed as if Washington had slipped for eternity into tedious obscurity, with neither news nor relevance to interest the rest of the country. Now, as David Osborne observes, the whole nation - in restaurants, on talk-shows, on the Internet - can talk about nothing else. It's Watergate time again.

Never mind the Superbowl tomorrow. Don't think of starting a discussion about Ted Kaczynski, who is to plead guilty to his string of mail-bombing charges. He goes by the name of the Unabomber. But that epithet has morphed in recent hours and is being applied instead to Bill Clinton: President Unabomber.

Credit for that goes to Jay Leno, the television host and comic. And there are more. This is "Zippergate" and the potential for ribaldry is almost endless. "Looks like President Bushy-Pants has been at it again,"

offered Craig Kilborn on Comedy Central Thursday night. Earwig on any conversation in the US today and the betting is the topic will be the President and Monica Lewinsky. In the past 24 hours this correspondent has listened in on others talking in an plane, on a train and in a restaurant. And everyone, it seems, assumes the charges are true.

The swirl is inescapable. Television networks that spent entire budgets sending famous news-anchors to Cuba for the Pope have had to haul them back to steward coverage of the crisis. And these are busy people. Most networks have been clearing even their primetime menus of comedies and sitcoms for news and analysis.

While pundits repeated that these are allegations, not facts, private conversations are far less restrained. The twists and turns of what may have happened, what may be wrong with the President's mind, what he may have done exactly with Ms Lewinsky are surreal in their scope. Especially tantalising: a report that Ms Lewinsky has spoken of having a "particular type of sex" with

the President. What type could that be exactly? Was it oral sex, as the President is alleged to have suggested to Paula Jones? Is it possible his denial of having had an "improper relationship" is somehow premised on a belief on his part that oral sex is not real sex and therefore does not count as adultery?

And what about the latest nugget on the Drudge Report, an Internet website that helped propel the scandal into the public sphere and which specialises in completely unproven filth? This is that Ms Lewinsky

is in possession of an item of clothing with Mr Clinton's semen on it. Where will this end?

One Leno monologue began: "So this is Day Two of Jailbait-gate for President, or, as they're calling him now, the Unabomber. After five years of investigating and \$35m, Kenneth Starr has found the smoking gun, and it's apparently in President Clinton's pants." Only one thing is darkening the mood of the late-night script-writers: the prospect of a Gore presidency. Where would be the fun in that?

## White House struck dumb as crisis deepens

It may look as if the White House is gambling that keeping the President away from the cameras will make the Lewinsky scandal go away. But, as David Osborne in Washington wagers, the truth is quite the opposite. They know the crisis is only deepening and they are in a panic about how to confront it.

His presidency and place in history in jeopardy, Bill Clinton failed to come before the American voters yesterday to offer a fresh explanation about the sex claims that have crashed around him as his advisers in the White House desperately squabbled about his best course of action.

There was no sign, meanwhile, of any let-up in the explosive crisis that has grown out of allegations that the President had sexual relations with a White House intern, Monica Lewinsky, in 1995 when she was only 21, and that he may have committed perjury and attempted to suborn Ms Lewinsky to commit perjury.

With the atmosphere in the White House already balanced somewhere between political paralysis and outright panic, it found itself served with sweeping subpoenas yesterday by the special prosecutor.

## 'Jones' team is now unearthing others Clinton may have had sex with'

tor, Kenneth Starr, who has been investigating alleged improprieties by the President since 1994.

Meanwhile, Washington positively reverberated with the possible prospect - though probably still a distant one - of a presidential resignation or impeachment. One senior administration official was heard to observe of the charges: "If true, it will cost Clinton the presidency. At a minimum, it will be disruptive for at least a year and make it a lot harder to push through our policies."

Under intense pressure from his political advisors to offer a new and comprehensive denial of the allegations, Mr Clinton is now facing the deadline of his annual State of the Union address to Congress on Tuesday. It seems inconceivable that the address can be delayed as has been suggested in some quarters in Washington.

But while some in the White House argue that Mr Clinton's earlier attempts to dismiss the allegations in brief interviews on Wednesday failed and that he must try again with either a press conference or fresh

interviews before Tuesday's address, his legal advisors are pressing him to wait. Their concern, apparently, is that the White House still has not got its own facts straight in a way that would be convincing.

Mr Clinton for the first time discussed the crisis with his cabinet, ostensibly summoned to discuss the contents of the State of the Union speech. Madeleine Albright, the Secretary of State, said afterwards: "He started out by saying that the allegations are untrue and that we should stay focused on our jobs and that everything will be fine."

Yesterday was notable also by something else that did not happen: a deposition by Ms Lewinsky to lawyers representing Paula Jones, whose own lawsuit against the President is to go to trial in May, was postponed by an Arkansas judge. There had been huge anticipation ahead of the deposition, first planned for yesterday, to see if Ms Lewinsky decides to take advantage of her Fifth Amendment right not to answer questions.

At issue is the suspicion that Ms Lewinsky will feel obliged to contradict an earlier affidavit given to Ms Jones' team in which she denied having had sexual relations with Mr Clinton.

Tapes now in the possession of the special prosecutor Starr allegedly contain conversations between Ms Lewinsky and a friend and former colleague, Linda Tripp, in which Lewinsky discusses having had such relations.

Ms Lewinsky, who faces possible criminal charges for perjury, reportedly said in her affidavit: "I have the utmost respect for the President, who always behaved appropriately in my presence. I have never had a sexual relationship with the President."

Mr Clinton is believed similarly to have denied having had sex with Ms Lewinsky when he was asked about her during his own five-hour deposition to lawyers of Ms Jones last Saturday. It is that which may open him to perjury charges. Mr Starr is also pursuing suspicions that the President and his close friend, Vernon Jordan, may have leaned on Ms Lewinsky to lie in her own deposition.

The lawyer representing Ms Lewinsky lashed out at Mr Starr, saying that he was unethically targeting his client. He also suggested that Mr Starr was resisting giving Ms Lewinsky the protection of immunity from criminal charges if she comes forward to corroborate the allegations.

"She has been targeted. She is a target," attorney William Ginsburg said yesterday. In what could become an important issue in any trial, Mr Ginsburg also raised questions about the legality of Mr Starr's investigative tactics, in particular his decision to wire Ms Tripp for one more conversation she had with Lewinsky in a Washington area hotel a week ago.

Meanwhile, the President faces still worse peril from a team of investigators dispatched by the Jones team to try to unearth other women who may have been sexually involved with the President.

Jones' lawyers have reportedly served a subpoena on the widow of Larry Lawrence, the former United States ambassador to Switzerland who achieved posthumous notoriety when he was recently disinterred from the Arlington military cemetery after it was found he did not qualify as a military hero.



Muslim protesters burning an effigy of President Clinton in Karachi yesterday. They were calling for a holy war to force Israel out of Jerusalem and the West Bank. Photograph: Aamir Qureshi/APF

## No way out as spectre looms over Union address

When America began, it was no big deal. The President, reads Section Three of Article Two of the Constitution, "shall from time to time give to the Congress information of the state of the Union."

In those days, presidents could, and did, send a written message to Capitol Hill, without appearing. Nor at first was it an annual event. Today, the State of the Union, normally delivered on the final Tuesday of January, is the equivalent of the State Opening of Parliament. It takes place in the evening,

broadcast live on the same major networks which no longer deign to carry mere presidential news conferences (unless of course a Monica Lewinsky happens along).

At nine o'clock, the President arrives at the House of Representatives, packed with Cabinet members, Congressmen and Senators and members of the diplomatic corps. Behind him on the rostrum sit the Vice-President and the Speaker, who formally introduces the President.

"The President of the United States," bellows the House Sergeant at Arms. Ancient en-

mities are briefly forgotten.

In normal times, Mr Clinton would make his way slowly down the aisle into the pit of the chamber, grinning, glad-handing and exchanging greetings with Democrats and Republicans alike.

But this year? For a President enmeshed in the worst scandal of his career, his speech threatens to be excruciating. Plans and policy, budget surpluses, Saddam Hussein? Forget it. Mr Clinton will be on the rostrum. But peering over his shoulder will be the spectre of Monica Lewinsky.

— Rupert Cornwell

## Vice President stays loyal, but could soon find himself promoted

Consider, in all of this, the plight of one Al Gore. How does he behave as the Lewinsky scandal envelops his President? His task must be to show loyalty to his senior partner in White House. But at the same time, he must know this: people are gossiping already about a Gore presidency.

For the first 36 hours after the storm first broke in Wednesday morning's newspapers, the Vice President offered no response. Indeed, on that same day, he stuck to his schedule and appeared at an event to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Roe v Wade Supreme Court decision on abortion. He delivered his

speech, in characteristic wooden fashion, without so much as a nod to the tempest outside.

He cannot have avoided hearing the titters in the audience, however, on his introduction to the podium. "He has taken the time today, out of an enormously busy schedule," the speaker began. "I mean Arafat's in town, Netanyahu... and a few other things."

It is not as if Mr Gore has not had sufficient on-the-job training. Indeed, his crash course came before the 1992 election, when the Clinton-Gore campaign nearly became derailed by Gennifer Flowers' adultery allegations. Since then, he has perfected the art of loy-

alty-while-lying-low through Whitewater, Vince Foster, Web Hubbel, Paula Jones. There has been almost no let-up.

Finally, in a pre-arranged interview with a group of newspaper columnists, the fruit of which was published yesterday, the Vice President did address the crisis. And, so far, he is standing by his man. Indeed, he has been more or less alone in Washington voluntarily to break cover on Clinton's behalf.

"The President has denied the charges, and I believe it," Mr Gore told the scribes gathered in his White House office. "He has said he will co-operate fully with the independent counsel. And you will see that

that is exactly what he does". Poignantly, Mr Gore added: "Beyond that, he is not only the President of the country, he is my friend". Mr Clinton, he said, has been able to "maintain his focus on the agenda he has been pursuing on behalf of the American people".

Otherwise, Mr Gore is conspicuously absent from the spotlight. Aides and friends are also staying quiet, declining to answer media inquiries. And all of this while lawmakers in Congress, Republicans certainly and even some Democrats, are openly talking about a future with President Al Gore and First Lady Tipper.

— David Osborne

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## Apartheid leader makes the most of his day in court

After months of defying the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, PW Botha, former South African president, found himself in court yesterday. Mary Braid watched in vain for a glimmer of repentance.

In Georg, an Afrikaner stronghold on the south-east coast, the years seemed to melt away. The razor wire was rolled out and black protesters were monitored by helicopters buzzing overhead.

The extras then were relics of another time and place. The same applied to the star of the show, PW Botha, 82, custodian of apartheid during some of its bloodiest years, seemed to have been kept on ice for the decade since he was elbowed from power.

Charged with contempt for ignoring subpoenas to attend a hearing of the TRC, the body charged with laying bare the atrocities of the past, the old man emerged from his BMW with Reinette Naude, his new fiancée, half his age, the same old didactic, inflexible Botha.

The hearing was over quickly; postponed for plea until next month. The magistrate was black. Mr Botha insisted he did not mind; had he not once played with little black boys? But that he should judge the old oppressor has its ironies and was evidence at least of South Africa's profound change.

But change seemed to have passed Mr Botha by. Expected to keep his head down and his mouth shut, the former president surprised with a rare 40-minute political speech in which he defended apartheid as mere "good neighbourliness".

When sniggers spread across the court he demanded: "Who laughed?" Outside the court, the banners listed the names of apartheid's victims and warned there could be "No reconciliation without Truth". "He never thought it would come to this," said one protester. "But he cannot ignore the TRC. He has answers and we want them."

But inside it was vintage rhetoric - Mr Botha arguing with reporters that he tried to save South Africa from the "Communist onslaught" and thanking former soldiers and policemen - including three former generals who turned up to protect him from the TRC "witchhunt" - who had joined him in the fight. "I tried to protect our fatherland," bellowed Mr Botha. "Is that the same fatherland as mine?" said a young black ANC supporter at the back.

Mr Botha said the TRC wanted humiliation not information. He had nothing to apologise for. He said he and his people were under attack. The Afrikaner tiger he warned was awakening and disaster loomed if the TRC continued to pursue him. The Afrikaner tiger must have been otherwise engaged yesterday. Only a tiny group of odds and sods showed.

## French love and hate the mobile

The French were slow to catch on to the global craze for the mobile telephone. But they are catching up rapidly - and loudly. So much so, John Lichfield writes from Paris, that a majority of French people want them banned in public places.

The time is early evening, the scene is a TGV leaving Lyons for Paris. A prosperous-looking business man calls his wife on his mobile phone. "Sorry, chérie," he announces to the whole carriage. "The meeting is running late. I have to stay in Lyons tonight."

A minute later he dials a different number. "Chérie?" he says, equally loudly. "Everything is fixed. My wife thinks I am in Lyons. I will meet you tonight at (such and such a restaurant)..."

The anecdote, recounted recently in a French magazine, proves that the mobile phone is adaptable to any culture. For a long time, it seemed, that France would resist the global temptation to be permanently in touch with the rest of the world. But the country is now falling for the mobile in a big way: there were 862,000 new subscriptions last month alone, many of them Christmas presents. The phone operating companies forecast that the number of users will double by the end of this year to 10,000,000.

Atrocious stories abound. One of the most terrifying sights in Paris is to see cars hurtling into the automotive jazzi at the Etoile while their drivers chat on the phone. A university professor complained recently that he had been interrupted 37 times by mobile beeps during a four-hour lecture. Charles Aznavour broke off in mid-song at a concert at the Olympia in November to plead with a member of the audience to answer his phone.

A number of fashionable Parisian restaurants, notably the Brasserie Lipp at St Germain des Prés, have banned mobiles completely. At another restaurant, the Floralie, near the Bourse, the proprietor has resorted to blowing a whistle when the sound of the beeping, and the disembodied



Trunk call: A man on his phone beneath an underwear poster at the International Lingerie Show in Paris Photograph: AP

conversations, becomes unbearable. At Chez Bibi, also close to the Bourse, the proprietor received a call from a man sitting at one of his tables, complaining that he was still waiting for his food.

An opinion poll for the newspaper *Le Parisien* has revealed that a majority of French people would like to see a ban on the use of mobile phones in public places, similar to the existing law restricting smoking. Of those polled, 87 per cent wanted the mobile to be banned in theatres and

cinemas, 81 per cent in restaurants, 74 per cent at sporting events, 66 per cent in public transport and 64 per cent in cars.

Curiously, the belated conversion of the French to the mobile phone - there are still only half as many in circulation as in Britain, a quarter of the density in the Scandinavian countries - is a case of history repeating itself. Until the early 1980s, France had the lowest proportion of fixed phones of any developed country. This was a case of the French love of conversation

struggling against the French worship of privacy. Only 75 per cent of households had a phone in 1983; the figure has now risen to 94 per cent.

The resistance to the mobile has been dissolved more rapidly, partly because of a price-war between operators which has brought the cost crashing down. Early legislation to curb the mobile seems unlikely. If France follows the pattern of other countries, behaviour should improve once the first flush of novelty wears away.

## The grisly currency traded between Israel and its enemies

Lebanon's body bazaar - the constant bargaining between guerrillas and the Israeli army for the exchange of each other's corpses - has reached a gruesome stage. As our Middle East Correspondent reports from Tyre, the Israelis - anxious to retrieve the remains of a soldier killed in an ambush last year - are leaving the bodies of dead guerrillas unburied in the no-man's land of southern Lebanon.

Amid the rocks of the Wadi Selouki lie three dead men. Rajeh Aidi, Samer Ballout and Saleh al-Jadaa have been there since 24 October, the day when their Islamic Jihad guerrilla operation against Israeli occupation troops went fatally wrong. All three - Aidi was Lebanese, the other two Palestinian - were shot dead in a gun battle and within hours, the United Nations and the International Red Cross asked the Israelis for permission to retrieve the bodies for burial.

Despite repeated requests, the UN says it never even received a reply. The Red Cross confirms it was refused permission to collect the corpses for "security" reasons. A month later, six more Shia guerrillas - two from Hizbollah and four from Amal - were killed by the Israelis near Tair Hafa. Their bodies, too, were allowed to lie unburied for days, prey to the wild boars and dogs that move in packs through the ravines of southern Lebanon.

No one in southern Lebanon - least of all the UN - has much doubt about what lies behind this grisly new practice. On 5 September last year, a Lebanese double-agent lured Israeli troops into a Hizbollah ambush in which 12 Israeli soldiers were killed. The remains of one of them - a head and some limbs - were left at the scene and later displayed by the Hizbollah. Israel demanded their return and the Hizbollah agreed - but only if Israel freed a series of important Lebanese Shia prisoners held inside Israel and at the Khiam prison in the Israeli occupation zone where torture is regularly practised.

Israel refused the deal. And from then on, guerrillas who fell in no-man's land were left to rot. At Tair Hafa, Israeli troops did - much later in November - remove the six corpses, but only after they had been prey to wild animals. Israel already has a cemetery packed with more than 300 Palestinian and Hizbollah corpses, each neatly buried and identified in preparation for future body exchanges between Israel and its enemies. When the son of Sayed Hassan Nasrallah, the Hizbollah leader, was killed in an am-

bush later in September last year, an exception was made to Israel's rule and his body was recovered, filmed on a mortuary slab and then buried along with the other guerrillas in the cemetery at Gadot on the occupied Golan Heights. Recent reports, however, say that - fearing the body might be stolen by Hizbollah sympathisers - the Israelis have buried it at a secret location.

For his part, Sayed Nasrallah, who insisted that he be sent congratulations rather than condolences on the death of his guerrilla son, announced that he was not interested in the return of his son's body. The youth had gone to Paradise, he said, so his earthly remains meant nothing. This was bad news for the Israelis who had previously bargained for their own dead soldiers with the bodies of their enemies. With the Hizbollah wanting live prisoners rather than dead guerrillas in exchange for Israel's missing soldiers, the equation had been changed.

In reality, the precedent had been set last summer when the head of the German intelligence service arranged for the remains of two dead Israelis to be exchanged for 112 Hizbollah bodies and 45 guerrilla prisoners; many of the latter had spent years with-

BY ROBERT  
FISK

out trial in Khiam prison. To add further pressure for the return of their soldier killed in last September's ambush, the Israelis ended all international Red Cross visits to Khiam and banned further family visits to the jail - where some of the inmates have spent almost half their lives behind bars.

As if to make the grim *souk* of death even grimmer, Lebanese guerrillas are themselves believed to maintain a secret cemetery of their enemy dead. There is a widespread belief in Lebanon that the bodies of three Israeli soldiers who disappeared during a tank battle in the Bekaa Valley may be buried here. And somewhere in the Bekaa lies the grave of British freelance journalist Alec Collet - on assignment for the UN - who was taken hostage on the outskirts of Beirut in 1983; his kidnappers later released a video which showed what appeared to be his corpse hanging from a noose.

Although it has never been reported, the UN made two attempts to recover Collet's body in 1995. At the first site, in a field near the village of Mazraa al-Foukhar, three UN officials dug for the grave; they found bones - but they were later identified as those of a goat. Lebanon, it seems, keeps its secrets well: somewhere in this tiny country also lie the graves of some 22,000 Lebanese civil war kidnap victims, not one of whom has

## Army keeps peace in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwean troops maintained their vigil in the rock-strewn streets of Harare yesterday and some schools and factories remained shut after violent food riots earlier this week.

Police, who reported on Thursday that three people had

died in the protests on Monday and Tuesday, said six people had been killed.

Some 2,275 people, including the man alleged to have organised this week's protests, have been arrested.

— Reuters, Harare

## Indonesia budget fails to halt slide

The Indonesian government continued to flail helplessly in the face of economic meltdown, as a new budget announced yesterday failed to stop - or even to slow - the downward slide of its currency.

In Jakarta, the rupiah fell to 13,500 to the US dollar, down from 12,000 the previous afternoon, the fourth day in succession on which it has sunk to an all-time low.

Indonesian money has lost close to nine-tenths of its value in six months, placing an unbearable burden on companies which have debts in foreign currencies.

Many independent analysts believe that most Indonesian companies, unable to match their rising loan repayments, are technically bankrupt.

The government's inability to influence the situation was emphasised when the announcement of a new budget did nothing to calm the currency markets.

A fortnight ago President Suharto provoked derision among international investors

with an original budget which predicted economic growth as high as 4 per cent, inflation as low as 9 per cent and an exchange rate of 4,000 rupiah to the dollar.

Those targets were revised under pressure from the International Monetary Fund, which has promised \$43bn (£27bn) to bail out the Indonesian economy.

The finance minister, Marie Muhammad, predicted zero economic growth in the financial year for 1998 to 1999, an inflation rate of 20 per cent and an average rupiah rate of 5,000 to the dollar, all figures which have been approved by the IMF.

The currency markets seem to have completely lost confidence in President Suharto's regime, and a series of hopeful economic measures have failed to remedy the crisis. There was another protest in Jakarta by a group of demonstrators calling for President Suharto to reverse his decision to begin a seventh term in office in March.

— Richard Lloyd Parry, Malang



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If you travel within Band A, then simply add the outbound and inbound prices together to get your return fare. If you travel from 29 March then the prices are divided into off-peak (Band B) and peak (Band C).

If you want to travel off peak then use the hints in the grid to advise you of the best times to fly. One leg of your journey may be charged at an off peak rate and the other at a peak rate. In this case you simply add the peak rate to the off peak rate to get to your total fare.

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Token	Token	Token
Token	Token	Token
Token	Token	Token

### Destinations and single flight prices including tax

DESTINATION	BAND A FEB 21 - MARCH 28 Outbound (£) Inbound (£)		BAND B MARCH 29 - SEPT 4 OFF-PEAK Outbound (£) Inbound (£)		BAND C MARCH 29 - SEPT 4 PEAK Outbound (£) Inbound (£)	
	Outbound (£)	Inbound (£)	Outbound (£)	Inbound (£)	Outbound (£)	Inbound (£)
Barcelona	22.00	12.00	34.50	24.50	39.50	29.50
Palma	22.00	12.00	29.50	19.50	44.50	34.50
Nice*	22.00	14.70	24.50	17.20	39.50	32.20
Amsterdam*	22.00	15.20	24.50	17.70	34.50	27.70
Geneva	22.00	19.00	24.50	21.50	34.50	31.50
Edinburgh	22.00	12.00	22.00	12.00	24.50	14.50
Aberdeen	22.00	12.00	22.00	12.00	24.50	14.50
Glasgow	22.00	12.00	22.00	12.00	24.50	14.50
Inverness	22.00	12.00	22.00	12.00	24.50	14.50

\*Prices from London Luton and Liverpool are the same.

To calculate the return price add the outbound and inbound fares together.

Flights between 29 March and 4 September have different prices for peak and off-peak travel. If you want to travel off-peak, choose to travel at less popular times. This guide will help.

### OFF-PEAK TIME ADVICE GUIDE

There are only very few off peak flights in July and August. Weekend flights will be very popular - be prepared to take alternative mid week flights.

If offer fares are not available at a particular time, a normal priced seat can be bought in conjunction with an offer seat.

There are no off-peak seats available on popular flights such as bank holiday weekends.

Here's more specific advice for more popular destinations

**Barcelona:** There are no off-peak flights in July or August.  
**Palma:** July and August are especially popular.  
**Nice:** Off-peak travel is only available in April.  
**Geneva:** Saturday travel before Easter is especially popular.  
**Inverness:** There is no off-peak travel in August.

**Exclusions:** You cannot fly with our offer during these times:  
All destinations: 9-14 April; 1-4 May; 22-25 May; 28-31 August.  
Liverpool-Nice: 2-4 March; 20-23 May; 14 June.  
Nice-Liverpool: 4-6 March; 25-26 May; 16 June.  
London Luton-Nice: 3-4 March; 20-23 May; 13-14 June.  
Nice-London Luton: 24-26 May; 16 June.  
London Luton-Edinburgh: 21-22 March.  
Edinburgh-London Luton: 22-23 March.  
London Luton-Barcelona: 7-10 May.  
Barcelona-London Luton: 10-11 May.  
You cannot travel on flights scheduled to depart after 2pm on Fridays and Sundays.

### BAND A: FEBRUARY 21 - MARCH 28

Day of travel	London Luton to Edinburgh	Edinburgh to London Luton
Mon-Fri	0710 0835	0835 0730
Sat	0820 0935	0935 0845
Sun	1510 1635	1635 1510
Mon-Fri	1825 1940	1940 1845
Sat	2100 2210	2210 2110
Sun	0830 0935	0935 0750
Sun	1715 1825	1825 1655
Sun	2025 2135	2135 1845
Sun	1950 2105	2105 1820
Sun	1405 1530	1530 1225
Sun	1725 1835	1835 1540
Sun	2035 2145	2145 1855

Day of travel	London Luton to Palma	Palma to London Luton
Mon-Fri	1140 1255	1255 1145
Sat	1140 1255	1255 1145
Sun	1140 1255	1255 1145
Mon-Fri	1705 1805	1805 1710
Sat	1705 1805	1805 1710
Sun	1705 1805	1805 1710
Mon-Fri	1905 2005	2005 1910
Sat	1905 2005	2005 1910
Sun	1905 2005	2005 1910
Mon-Fri	2105 2205	2205 2110
Sat	2105 2205	2205 2110
Sun	2105 2205	2205 2110

Day of travel	London Luton to Nice	Nice to London Luton
Mon-Fri	0705 1005	1005 1135
Sat	1225 1525	1525 1720
Sun	1805 1905	1945 2100
Mon-Fri	1705 1805	1845 1950
Sat	1705 1805	1845 1950
Sun	1705 1805	1845 1950
Mon-Fri	2105 2205	2205 2110
Sat	2105 2205	2205 2110
Sun	2105 2205	2205 2110

Day of travel	London Luton to Amsterdam	Amsterdam to London Luton
Mon-Fri	0705 1005	1005 1135
Sat	1225 1525	1525 1720
Sun	1805 1905	1945 2100
Mon-Fri	1705 1805	1845 1950
Sat	1705 1805	1845 1950
Sun	1705 1805	1845 1950
Mon-Fri	2105 2205	2205 2110
Sat	2105 2205	2205 2110
Sun	2105 2205	2205 2110

Day of travel	London Luton to Glasgow	Glasgow to London Luton
Mon-Fri	0715 0835	0835 0745
Sat	0820 0935	0935 0845
Sun	1510 1635	1635 1510
Mon-Fri	1825 1940	1940 1845
Sat	2100 2210	2210 2110
Sun	0830 0935	0935 0750
Sun	1715 1825	1825 1655
Sun	2025 2135	2135 1845
Sun	1950 2105	2105 1820
Sun	1405 1530	1530 1225
Sun	1725 1835	1835 1540
Sun	2035 2145	2145 1855

Day of travel	London Luton to Inverness	Inverness to London Luton
Mon-Fri	0715 0835	0835 0745
Sat	0820 0935	0935 0845
Sun	1510 1635	1635 1510
Mon-Fri	1825 1940	1940 1845
Sat	2100 2210	2210 2110
Sun	0830 0935	0935 0750
Sun	1715 1825	1825 1655
Sun	2025 2135	2135 1845
Sun	1950 2105	2105 1820
Sun	1405 1530	1530 1225
Sun	1725 1835	1835 1540
Sun	2035 2145	2145 1855

Day of travel	London Luton to Edinburgh	Edinburgh to London Luton
Mon-Fri	0715 0835	0835 0745
Sat	0820 0935	0935 0845
Sun	1510 1635	1635 1510
Mon-Fri	1825 1940	1940 1845
Sat	2100 2210	2210 2110
Sun	0830 0935	0935 0750
Sun	1715 1825	1825 1655
Sun	2025 2135	2135 1845
Sun	1950 2105	2105 1820
Sun	1405 1530	1530 1225
Sun	1725 1835	1835 1540
Sun	2035 2145	2145 1855

Day of travel	London Luton to Amsterdam	Amsterdam to London Luton
Mon-Fri	0715 0835	0835 0745
Sat	0820 0935	0935 0845
Sun	1510 1635	1635 1510
Mon-Fri	1825 1940	1940 1845
Sat	2100 2210	2210 2110
Sun	0830 0935	0935 0750
Sun	1715 1825	1825 1655
Sun	2025 2135	2135 1845
Sun	1950 2105	2105 1820
Sun	1405 1530	1530 1225
Sun	1725 1835	1835 1540
Sun	2035 2145	2145 1855

Day of travel	London Luton to Glasgow	Glasgow to London Luton
Mon-Fri	0715 0835	0835 0745
Sat	0820 0935	0935 0845
Sun	1510 1635	1635 1510
Mon-Fri	1825 1940	1940 1845
Sat	2100 2210	2210 2110
Sun	0830 0935	0935 0750
Sun	1715 1825	1825 1655
Sun	2025 2135	2135 1845
Sun	1950 2105	2105 1820
Sun	1405 1530	1530 1225
Sun	1725 1835	1835 1540
Sun	2035 2145	2145 1855

Day of travel	London Luton to Inverness	Inverness to London Luton
Mon-Fri	0715 0835	0835 0745
Sat	0820 0935	0935 0845
Sun	1510 1635	1635 1510
Mon-Fri	1825 1940	1940 1845
Sat	2100 2210	2210 2110
Sun	0830 0935	0935 0750
Sun	1715 1825	1825 1655
Sun	2025 2135	2135 1845
Sun	1950 2105	2105 1820
Sun	1405 1530	1530 1225
Sun	1725 1835	1835 1540
Sun	2035 2145	2145 1855

### BAND B/BAND C: MARCH 29 - SEPTEMBER 4

Day of travel	London Luton to Edinburgh	Edinburgh to London Luton
Mon-Fri	0715 0835	0835 0745
Sat	0820 0935	0935 0845
Sun	1510 1635	1635 1510
Mon-Fri	1825 1940	1940 1845
Sat	2100 2210	2210 2110
Sun	0830 0935	0935 0750
Sun	1715 1825	1825 1655
Sun	2025 2135	2135 1845
Sun	1950 2105	2105 1820
Sun	1405 1530	1530 1225
Sun	1725 1835	1835 1540
Sun	2035 2145	2145 1855

Day of travel	London Luton to Amsterdam	Amsterdam to London Luton
Mon-Fri	0715 0835	0835 0745
Sat	0820 0935	0935 0845
Sun	1510 1635	1635 1510
Mon-Fri	1825 1940	1940 1845
Sat	2100 2210	2210 2110
Sun	0830 0935	0935 0750
Sun	1715 1825	1825 1655
Sun	2025 2135	2135 1845
Sun	1950 2105	2105 1820
Sun	1405 1530	1530 1225
Sun	1725 1835	1835 1540
Sun	2035 2145	2145 1855

Day of travel	London Luton to Palma	Palma to London Luton
Mon-Fri	1140 1255	1255 1145
Sat	1140 1255	1255 1145
Sun	1140 1255	1255 1145
Mon-Fri	1705 1805	1805 1710
Sat	1705 1805	1805 1710
Sun	1705 1805	1805 1710
Mon-Fri	1905 2005	2005 1910
Sat	1905 2005	2005 1910
Sun	1905 2005	2005 1910
Mon-Fri	2105 2205	2205 2110
Sat	2105 2205	2205 2110
Sun	2105 2205	2205 2110

Day of travel	London Luton to Nice	Nice to London Luton
Mon-Fri	0705 1005	1005 1135
Sat	1225 1525	1525 1720
Sun	1805 1905	1945 2100
Mon-Fri	1705 1805	1845 1950
Sat	1705 1805	1845 1950
Sun	1705 1805	1845 1950
Mon-Fri	2105 2205	2205 2110
Sat	2105 2205	2205 2110
Sun	2105 2205	2205 2110

Day of travel	London Luton to Amsterdam	Amsterdam to London Luton
Mon-Fri	0705 1005	1005 1135
Sat	1225 1525	1525 1720
Sun	1805 1905	1945 2100
Mon-Fri	1705 1805	1845 1950
Sat	1705 1805	1845 1950
Sun	1705 1805	1845 1950
Mon-Fri	2105 2205	2205 2110
Sat	2105 2205	2205 2110
Sun	2105 2205	2205 2110

Day of travel	London Luton to Glasgow	Glasgow to London Luton
Mon-Fri	0715 0835	0835 0745
Sat	0820 0935	0935 0845
Sun	1510 1635	1635 1510
Mon-Fri	1825 1940	1940 1845
Sat	2100 2210	2210 2110
Sun	0830 0935	0935 0750
Sun	1715 1825	1825 1655
Sun	2025 2135	2135 1845
Sun	1950 2105	2105 1820
Sun	1405 1530	1530 1225
Sun	1725 1835	1835 1540
Sun	2035 2145	2145 1855

Day of travel	London Luton to Inverness	Inverness to London Luton
Mon-Fri	0715 0835	0835 0745
Sat	0820 0935	0935 0845
Sun	1510 1635	1635 1510
Mon-Fri	1825 1940	1940 1845
Sat	2100 2210	2210 2110
Sun	0830 0935	0935 0750
Sun	1715 1825	1825 1655
Sun	2025 2135	2135 1845
Sun	1950 2105	21

## A WEEK IN THE ARTS

DAVID LISTER

It takes something pretty extraordinary to have one coming out in sympathy for the Royal Opera House. But then Gerald Kaufman's performance at the Culture Select Committee on Wednesday was pretty extraordinary. I've watched this Committee through most of its life, and it has achievements to its credit. Sadly, now it is in danger of overreaching itself. Certainly its chairman is.

In Mr Kaufman the Committee has a cultured chairman with a wide experience of the arts. I hesitate to use the old joke, "I know this because he told me so himself," but it's true that Kaufman misses few opportunities to drop the name of an opera or two, a film or three, or a CD that he bought in some American town for half the price it costs in the UK. The delicious phrase, "When I was in Hollywood" that he would use when quizzing film industry executives seemed to give a tantalising hint of a previous life in movies. In fact, it simply referred to a few days' fact-finding trip. Never mind. He chairs the Committee with élan and perspicacity; his breadth of artistic knowledge lends the committee respect and influence; and its original report on the Royal Opera House caused heads to roll and the Government finally to get a grip.

This week he returned rather eagerly to the fray, but now the backbench politician has begun to sound worryingly like an artistic director manque. Kaufman said there was a case for curtailing or cancelling



Kaufman: artistic director manque

the Royal Opera's current season after the shocking reviews for the new *Barber of Seville* and *Marriage of Figaro*. He even read out part of one stinker that *Figaro* had received.

This is dangerous stuff, both aesthetically and politically. As it happens, the *Barber* also got some very good reviews. But even if both productions had been roundly slated, audiences at both, perhaps lacking Mr Kaufman's record collection, thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The critics are an important element in the reaction to a production, but they are not the sole element, and no company should allow their views to dictate its policy. Far less should any arts company let the fear of a tongue-lashing in the Commons dictate its artistic policy. The potential for experimentation simply to disappear if companies have to anticipate a public select committee rebuke is deeply worrying. The Committee's remit is to investigate and protest about how public money is being spent, not to call for closure on the basis of selective reviews.

As someone with a rich historical perspective on the arts, Kaufman must know that critics can get it wrong. And not only in opera. I can recall a film critic slating *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, a movie that actually did rather well around the globe. The name of that maverick reviewer? Gerald Kaufman.



Po-faced idolaters of modernism, beware: John Tavener is back and he's got company

Photograph: Rui Xavier

## Still having a whale of a time 30 years on

On 24 January 1968, the London Sinfonietta burst fully formed from the belly of 'The Whale', when a 24-year-old David Atherton conducted the world premiere of an anarchic new 'cantata' - soon to be recorded by The Beatles' Apple label, complete with guest appearance by Ringo Starr (on loud-hailer) - by a 23-year-old John Tavener. Tonight, 30 years and 119 world premieres later, the Sinfonietta reprises that pioneering piece by a composer whose closing hymn for Princess Diana's funeral service has now made him a household name the world over. Here, Malcolm Hayes talks to Tavener and others who played a part in that historic first night in 1968.

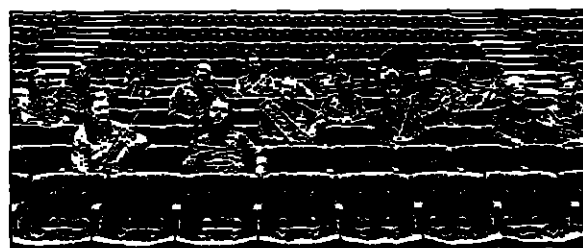
**DAVID ATHERTON**  
First artistic director/conductor  
"For me, it goes back to when I was a little kid in Blackpool, and I used to listen to the Thursday-evening *Invitation Concerts* of 20th-century music on what was then the BBC Third Programme. I just knew that this was something I wanted to be part of."

**NICHOLAS SNOWMAN**  
First general manager. Chief executive of the SBC since 1986  
"The seeds of that first night were sown early, although none of us knew it at the time. I'd been at

school with Tavener, and had met a lot of the players when we were students together at Cambridge. David Atherton was there too. "Why did the idea take off as it did? It was all instinctive. Looking back, I think two things were crucial. First, there was a real need for a specialised 20th-century ensemble in London at that time. It's hard to remember today, when there are so many more of them, how much that gap needed filling. Also, it can't be over-emphasised how much David brought to the Sinfonietta. It was really his talent that made the difference."

**JOHN CONSTABLE**  
Principal pianist since 1968  
"The main thing I remember from the first performance of *The Whale* was holding the sustaining pedal down, while Raimund Herincz [baritone] shouted into the inside of the piano to get the echo effect. But where David was so clever was that he'd realised what a good piece *The Whale* really was. It was full of the sort of avant-garde devices which usually have people muttering about 'silly modern music'. But Vyner's time as general manager was when our commissioning policy came into its own. We toured as a chamber ensemble of 14 or 15 players, with single strings, and this format was a huge influence on the way composers wrote. Today, it's a time for retrenchment - in the best sense. There's much more cross-fertilisation than there used to be between different schools of composers. "You can sum up what we're about in one word. Standards."

**ANDREW ROSNER**  
First orchestral manager, now a partner in Allied Artists  
"I remember the first night like it was yesterday. We'd been able to hire the players for not much money by promising to pay them on the same night. The string players weren't in Strauss's *Wind Sonata*, so of course they were going home after *The Whale*. I'd been co-opted as one of the voices which shout through loud-hailers from different parts of the hall. I then had to get from a box right at the top of the QEH, back across a really quite dangerous part of the roof, and down to the backstage area to pay the players. I just made it in time. "In those early days we used



1968: if you can remember it, you weren't there

the audience realised that, in this case, it worked."

**SEBASTIAN BELL**  
Principal flautist since 1968  
"They asked me to do *The Whale*, but I couldn't - I was on tour. I started with the second concert, when we did Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*. Since then I must have played more Sinfonietta concerts than anyone else. "I think there have been three quite clear phases in how we've evolved. First, it was a case of bringing full professionalism to bear on 20th-century music. David set the tone in the early days: he was ruthless if a player wasn't up to the level he demanded. Heads rolled like pineapples. Then Michael

to run the Sinfonietta as a cottage industry from this little house in Temple Fortune - David Atherton, Nick Snowman, Tony Pay and myself. We just drew up plans for our second season, took them to the Arts Council, and said, 'Look at what we're doing: how can you afford not to support us?'"

**CLIVE GILLINSON**  
Cellist in first concert. Managing director of the LSO since 1984  
"I was still a student at the Royal Academy at the time. I don't remember the performance of *The Whale* all that well, but I do remember the stir it caused. You can't over-emphasise how innovative the Sinfonietta's agenda was at the time. What they were doing was new and utterly different and really challenging. "I think what truly counted was that the Sinfonietta management team knew how to take that success forward. It's all about people. You can have any theory you like, but it comes down to the individuals involved. In some ways the circumstances of running an orchestra are different now compared to then. But those people would have made things happen in any time. "In the LSO we've found that audiences are now much more willing to experience new works than they were. The Sinfonietta has been one of the key elements in that change of perception."

**ANTHONY PAY**  
Principal clarinetist until 1984  
"One of the things I had to do in *The Whale* was start up the pre-recorded tape that accompanied Alvar Lidell reading the entry on whales from the Collins

*Encyclopaedia*. I pressed the switch, and out came this horrible buzzing noise. David looked as if he could murder someone. Fortunately I saw that a jackplug had been pulled out, probably by the flutes moving their chairs. I put it back in, and the noise stopped. Some of the reviewers thought that the buzzing noise was a surprisingly good effect."

**JOHN TAVENER**  
Composer of 'The Whale'. His new opera 'The Toll Houses' will be premiered by the Royal Opera in October  
"When I started out as a composer, I wasn't happy with the dominance of what I called 'the European intellectual kitchen-house'. I'm not against serial music as such: Stravinsky's late works, for instance, have for me the most wonderful strength and purity. But in England at the time it was all terribly puffed. *The Whale* was partly a reaction against this idolatry of modernism - the idea that, if you were a composer, you had to write that kind of music. I enjoyed sending all that up a bit. "I remember being knocked back by the amount of publicity it had. I didn't like this much. For some time afterwards I knew what I'd done, but I wasn't sure where I was going. Today, I can relate more clearly to other works of mine from that period: *Celtic Requiem*, and my Chamber Concerto. But I feel that *The Whale* is still a valid statement. It isn't my favourite among my early pieces. But I see its point."

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## THE WEEK ON RADIO

ROBERT HANKS

A friend of mine once flirted with anarchism, but stopped going to meetings because, he said, they never got down to discussing anything: the whole evening got taken up with people apologising to each other and insisting that they didn't want to impose an agenda on anybody. I don't know if anarchist meetings really are like that - going by the anarchists assembled on *Freedom Radio* (Radio 3, Sunday), it seems unlikely, since they were all too aware of the potential for caricature and concerned with promoting direct action. But it is certainly true that anarchism is too floppy and diffuse to be reduced to rigid structures, and this didn't make life easy for Christopher Cook as he roamed around Britain and the US talking to contemporary anarchists.

Cook and his producer, Mark Burman, had found an impressive set of interviewees, many of them dredged up using the Internet, illustrating the huge variety and range of anarchist activities, from tree-hugging to running radio stations, from Moscow to San Francisco.

The common thread was a distrust of the state and its evil twin, the corporation: what the modern anarchist wants is not life without regulation, but life on a smaller scale - political power concentrated at a local level. Much of what they said sounded not simply attractive, but downright incontrovertible. After all, who doesn't think the Millennium Dome is a white elephant? But, hey, it's the anarchists who went out there and climbed up the cranes to try and keep it from happening.

In the end, though, *Freedom Radio* made

for frustratingly confusing and inconclusive listening. With so much to cover, and with huge gaps in the account presented of the anarchist tradition, it became hard at times to see what put these people in the same programme.

It did, however, raise the question of why anarchist radio has flourished in America but not in Britain. (Anybody who knows different, please write.) Mark Burman's theory is that, apart from strict enforcement of broadcast licensing laws, the BBC has killed the need for it by providing enough intelligent political analysis and a wide enough range of views to take the lid off the people's simmering rage. That sounds plausible; maybe we should add that the BBC, big, ogreish corporation that it is, has given house-room to plenty of mavericks over the years: there's space for them to slosh around in Broadcast House.

This week, though, the dearth of mavericks - in fact, of anything very interesting - has rather got me down. Maybe this is just Seasonal Affective Disorder, and it will all look rosier when the clocks go back. Even in high summer, though, it would be hard to fight the sheer tedium of *Watch Out for the Jellyfish* (Radio 4, Tuesday), in which Michael Portillo visited his mother's home-town of Kirkcaldy to show us round the scenes of boyhood holidays and demonstrate his utter lack of a sense of humour. Few programmes have lived up to their titles so completely, except that a jellyfish can sting. If this was the start of Michael Portillo's attempt to win his way back into public favour, William Hague can breathe a sigh of relief.

Thu 5 Feb 7.30pm  
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**HAYDN**  
Creation Mass  
**MONTEVERDI CHOR**  
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## The Essex connection



Anthony Tucker.



Patrick Tate.



Craig Rolfe.



Donna Jagger:  
girlfriend of Craig  
Rolfe

Patrick Tate, Anthony Tucker and Craig Rolfe: Essex drug-dealers killed by rivals at a farm in Rettendon, Essex in December. Called themselves "The Firm"



Jack Whomes.

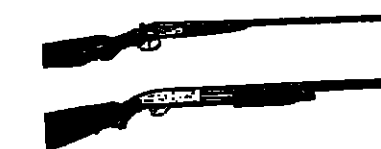


Michael Steele.

Jack Whomes and Michael Steele: drug rivals of the three above. Convicted of their murder on Tuesday and given life sentences. Steele is known to have smuggled cannabis into England by boat and plane.



The car in which the three were murdered is removed from the scene



Weapons similar to those used by the killers



Raquel's Disco, in Basildon, Essex where Leah Betts bought the Ecstasy that killed her



Leah Betts: In coma before dying. Tucker (SEE ABOVE) Controlled the bouncers who supplied the E that killed Leah

**The Old Bailey trial this week of the men who murdered three drug dealers in Essex gave a rare glimpse into a violent and vengeful underworld on the edges of the capital - "the Home Counties connection".**

In the leafy commuter towns of Essex and Kent, men step out of the front doors in the Aca-cia Avenues to go to work. But the briefcases they carry can contain, instead of office papers and a packed lunch, a pistol and a stash of cocaine.

The underworld is no longer confined to the urban squalor of the inner cities. Successful gangsters have gentrified and become upwardly mobile, leaving their council flats for the Home Counties, and their working-class lifestyles for the trappings of success - des res, Rolls Royces and Range Rovers, a boat in the local marina, ponies for the children. The patterns of the migration have been to counties adjacent to various parts of London: East End villains moved out to Essex, those south of the river to Kent, the gangs around Islington to Hertfordshire and the ones from Shepherd Bush and Kilburn to Middlesex. The sons of these villains carry on the "family business".

South Londoner Kenny Noye, Brinks Mat money launderer and killer of a policeman, lived in some splendour at his mansion in West Kingsdown in Kent until he disappeared following a fatal roadside stabbing. Roy Garner, police supergrass from the Tottenham area ended up with luxury houses and stud farms in Hertfordshire before being convicted of cocaine trafficking. And Charlie Kray had long left behind Vallance Road in east London, where he grew up with the twins Ronnie and Reg-

gie, when he was arrested last year for a £29m cocaine trafficking plot. Unusually for one of the East End criminal aristocracy, he had moved to Sanderstead, Surrey, where he lived with the daughter of a headmaster.

Criminologists maintain the arrival of such "quality villains" in the Home Counties brought with it a culture of crime and corruption which embraced local gangs. At the same time came the explosion in the importation of drugs and the money that came with it. Essex and Kent, in particular, became vitally important as routes for narcotics from the Continent to London and other major cities.

The murder of the three

## BY KIM SENGUPTA

plied to Tate and his accomplices had been of poor quality and Steele agreed to take back the cannabis and return a deposit of £70,000. The money was paid, but Tate denied receiving it and failed to return one third of the drugs haul.

Tate, an extremely violent mainline drug user, had threatened to shoot Steele after making him beg on his knees. His intended victim got to him and his two companions first.

After the shooting Steele said "they won't fuck with us again". He added he felt like

apparent drugs overdose in November 1994. But, Tate told his mother, Whitaker had been murdered by Tucker and Rolfe. They had injected him in the groin with a paralyzing drug, often used on horses, known as Special K, then, powerless but conscious and pleading for mercy, Whitaker was killed with an injection of lignocaine.

The night before his death Tate himself had badly beaten up the manager of a pizza shop over an imaginary slight. He had phoned the shop and demanded a specially made pizza

Lee Vella and had failed to pay. Nunn managed to escape from Vella's flat during the attack by throwing himself out of a window. Vella and his accomplices were convicted at their trial, and in July 1995 Vella was sentenced to 17 years in jail.

Vella, who bought ecstasy from Dutch dealers, was suspected of the torture of other victims who had been too scared to make complaints. One man had his head shaved, and the back of his arms burnt by a hot iron, another was given a "Glasgow smile" on both sides of his face with a Stanley knife, and another was anally raped with a broom handle. He was also suspected of being behind the shooting of a man, who

taking on the authorities by force to protect their merchandise. Towards the end of last year police and customs officers raided a hotel and discovered £70,000 worth of alcohol and cigarettes. The smugglers fled, only to come back with accomplices to try and storm the building and seize back the haul. They were only beaten off when the police themselves received reinforcement.

One CID officer said: "Crime in Dover and surrounding areas has gone up by 18 per cent, and even this is an underestimate as of course a lot of these attacks are simply not reported to the police."

"There are also links with drugs, because the heavies muscling in on bootlegging are also involved in drug trafficking. This is a problem which is not going to go away, we are facing a situation which was unheard of in Kent in the past."

His counterparts in Surrey would sympathise. A few years ago a pub described as the "most dangerous in Britain" was not in Brighton or the Glasgow Gorbals, but Carshalton. The St Heller Tavern had seen many fights and a man was shot in the face with a sawn-off shotgun.

A better class of villain has taken up residence further out in expensive areas like Weybridge where they rub shoulders in the golf club with actors and stockbrokers. A detective said: "They may think [that] away from the centre of London they would be away from prying eyes if the law, but we make sure we keep a watch on them. They may feel they are blending in with their neighbours, but we know who they are."

Criminologist Robert Emerson believes the expansion of crime into the Home Counties cannot be reversed. He said: "Social and logistical factors are such that this is bound to continue. However, it is unlikely the ordinary Home Counties residents would be directly affected by violence. After all, the criminals tend to only kill each other."



Moved: Kenny Noye (left), who killed a policeman, Charlie Kray and supergrass Roy Garner all opted for country living



men at Rettendon, in Essex was over drugs. The victims, Pat Tate, Tony Tucker and Craig Rolfe were dealers who supplied drugs through nightclubs and pubs in Essex and east London. It is one of their gang, it is believed, who supplied the ecstasy tablet which led to the death of policeman's daughter Leah Betts.

The victims had been in dispute with the men who killed them, Micky Steele and Jack Whomes, over a cannabis shipment. The court, which passed three life sentences on the men, with a recommended minimum of 15 years, had heard that a consignment of cannabis which Steele had sup-

"the angel of death". As Steele and fellow killer Whomes walked off after the shooting to be picked up by an accomplice, Darren Nicholls, they passed a sign saying: "The use of guns or any activity which disturbs people or wildlife are not allowed on this land. Enjoy your visit".

The violence of the triple execution and its apparent professionalism appeared shocking, especially in the context of the village setting. But police say extreme violence had become endemic in parts of the county over the years. Tucker and Rolfe were themselves suspected of a particularly brutal murder. Kevin Whitaker, a 28-year-old drug courier died of an

za with four different toppings on each quarter. The manager, 21-year-old Roger Ryall had said this was not possible. Within minutes Tate had arrived at the shop, battered Ryall and then smashed his head into a glass plate on the sink. Like others crossed by Tate and his friends, Mr Ryall thought it would be wise not to press charges.

Drug dealer Reggie Nunn too has painful memories of the extreme violence of the Essex underworld. His face was mutilated with a narrow-bladed fencing sword, an epic, over-another drugs dispute, the selling of a thousand tabs of ecstasy. He owed £7,000 to trafficker Jason

spent hours on a life-support machine and refused to give any information to the police.

In Kent, bootlegging of alcohol and cigarettes has been added to drugs as a source of underworld violence. In just one month, September last year, Dover had four shootings, a series of acid and machete attacks, and dozens of beatings. The reason behind this, say police and customs officials, is quite simple: organised gangs are fighting for control of a trade which is now estimated to be worth £1bn a year. Smaller gangs are having to pay rents to bigger ones for the privilege of smuggling the contraband. The gangs are not averse to

A horrific murder case this week highlighted on the violent and closed world of English gangland: but these are a new generation of villains - the thugs from suburbia

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## A presidency unzipped: history will not judge him kindly



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It seems unlikely that President Clinton will be impeached. Even if he has told – and encouraging the telling of – the little lies that are needed for the functioning of a society built on the myth of serial monogamy. But this week's revelations have delivered a jolt to the presidency that will change history. Until this week, Bill Clinton was destined to be remembered as a moderate reformer, a "borderline third tier" President, in the words of his former adviser Dick Morris. Now he will go down as Slick Willy, a man who made himself look ridiculous and demeaned the office of President because he could not keep his trousers up.

That is probably all that history – popular history anyway – will have room for: a couple of lines in a school textbook, and a photo of Bill and Hillary. (She, incidentally, is now more likely to be captioned as a stoic wife than the woman who tried to reform health care and failed.)

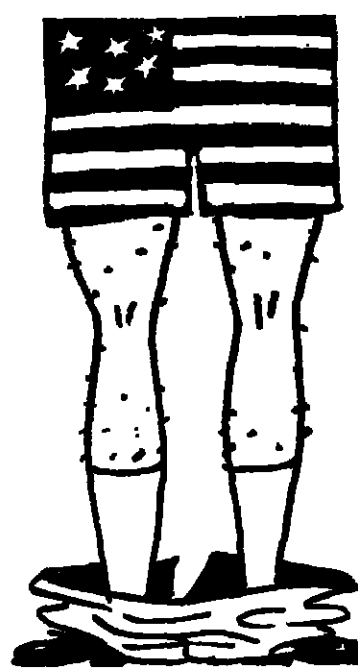
For us, who have to live through these times, however, the question, "Does Clinton matter?" is more complex, pressing and relevant. It is fit to ask: What difference would it make if Clinton fell? In order to answer that question, we have to assess both Clinton's record and – a few years early – the prospect of an Al Gore presidency.

So far, Clinton's record has been disappointing. He was elected on two important pledges. One was to give America a national health service; the other was to "end welfare as we know it". Both are still as far from fulfilment as ever. The nation has probably decided that it doesn't really want a comprehensive health service after all, while welfare reform has turned out to be much more difficult than the simplicities of campaign rhetoric could ever encompass.

This second failure has obvious and ominous implications for Tony Blair, whose New Labour platform was partly inspired by the 1992 US presidential campaign, in which Bill Clinton ran as a "New Democrat".

However, it must be remembered that the US constitution is very different from ours. Much of the responsibility for welfare lies with the states rather than the federal government. It has long been observed that in times other than those of national emergency, the President's main power lies in the realm of persuasion, symbol and rhetoric.

In these areas, Clinton has been the President for the time. A large rambling mansion of a man, a likeable, loose-fitting amalgam of good intentions, policy ideas and testosterone, he has



proved surprisingly popular. Like Mr Blair, he has been able to find the words to unite a nation in shock: the Oklahoma bombing was his death of a princess. But that is as far as the transatlantic parallels go. Where Mr Blair is straight and

puritanical, Mr Clinton is loose, erratic and a philanderer.

The present crisis has arisen almost inexorably from the pressures of the American political system. It requires candidates who are larger than life, over-endowed with personal charm in order to raise vast sums of money, and with mass-media sex appeal to cut through the clutter of the television age. It is bound to bring forth over-sexed men with an instrumental view of the opposite sex.

At the same time, it demands adherence to a moral code that owes more to New England in the 1600s than to the reality of modern life in Peoria, Illinois. The American media are still surprisingly prudish in matters sexual, but they are no longer so deferential as in the 1960s, when John Kennedy complained that he got a headache if he didn't incessantly satisfy his lusts.

None of this seems to matter much to the American electorate. Clinton has presided over stable economic growth and, partly as a result, has cut the federal budget deficit. He is, in fact, one of the most popular Presidents ever. But Dick Morris did not list Dwight Eisenhower as one of the 18 "great" Presidents, not even of the third tier. "He didn't do anything. Popularity doesn't get you on the list."

Clinton, then, will go down as a President who reflected America rather than changing it. His sexual appetite stands as a vivid analogy for America's gross desire to consume material goods and petroleum. The contrast with his Vice-President is stark. Al Gore is a buttoned-up puritan, who would have been satisfied burning witches righteously in Salem. He wrote a book about America's responsibility to save the planet from environmental disaster. And he took office with a plan to "reinvent government", to turn the incubus of state bureaucracy into an agent of change. That didn't happen, partly because Clinton, loose, creative and brilliant, dissipated the administration's political energies in too many large and unsuccessful policy initiatives.

It is a good thing that the US constitution does not allow the President too much scope for screwing things up. But it looks as if it will be up to Mr Gore to test the potential power of the presidency to change America for the better. That will probably not happen ahead of schedule, but it does no harm that this week's events have turned attention to the future. If the most powerful nation on earth can both be better governed and more environmentally responsible, that would be a step forward for the world.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Ulster's identity

Sir: The question of the "loyalists" of Northern Ireland is not whether they are British or Irish (letter, 22 January), but to what extent they are a nation unto themselves. The people of Ulster have a national identity that is separate from, but attached to, their British, or even Irish, identity. Most countries of Europe are in fact a patchwork of peoples who have a complex and shifting relationship with the nation state to which they legally belong.

Ireland is inhabited by two nations, two peoples, and the violence will not end until that fact is accepted and respected by all sides. Merely to "decant" the trouble from a British container into an Irish one would not change a thing. Though it would, if forced upon the Ulster people, mean another hundred years of killing with Irish soldiers and policemen who have to put on uniforms and wander the streets as easy meat for the guns of Ulsterite die-hards.

DANIEL MORNIN  
London SW20

Sir: Your correspondents (20 January) question the use of the term "loyalists" in Northern Ireland. There are at least two sources.

The first relates to the perception that "loyalism" relates to loyalty to the Crown and government of the UK. This is loyalty in accordance with the old Scottish Presbyterian concept of covenanting. Here loyalty is not an absolute that is simply given and implies blind obedience, but is part of a bargain struck between two parties (the covenant). Both sides have to keep their sides of the bargain, otherwise the "deal" is off. Many "loyalists" fear that the Crown (via its government) is not being loyal to its side.

The above is not a use of the term "loyal" that would be commonly thought of in England, Wales, America or even the Republic of Ireland. This highlights the importance of not assuming "Anglican" definitions.

A second usage of "loyalist" in Ulster is that of loyal to each other; "loyal and true" to your fellow "Prod" in the struggles with Catholics that have been a feature of nearly 400 years of history. This builds upon the old tradition of "banding" – coming together in common defence to keep the peace and protect life and property in the face of rebellion and attacks, where the individual interest was seen as inseparable from communal welfare. For Ulster Protestants this is especially important, given their identity myths of siege and massacre at the hands of Catholics.

It is only those unfamiliar with Ulster Protestants who find a contradiction in the use of the term "loyalist".

EAMES DINGLEY  
Centre for the Study of Conflict  
University of Ulster  
Jordanstown, Co Antrim



'Loyal and true': Orange marchers at Drumree

Photograph: Stephen Davison / Pacemaker

### Woodlands for all

Sir: Publication by the Forestry Commission of a new standard for managing Britain's woodland (report, 22 January) is an important step forward for environmentally friendly forestry. But it is regrettable that the standard does not insist upon public access to publicly subsidised woodlands.

If it is true that private landowners would rather not accept grants to create new woodland than do so subject to allowing public access, then the answer to the question of how woodland cover in Britain can be expanded is clear.

The Treasury's annual hand-out of £33m in planting grants should be transferred from the private sector to the Forestry Commission. Let the commission create the new woodlands that successive governments have aimed for and that the public clearly wants.

The commission has never had any hang-ups about giving people freedom to roam through its woodlands. They do this on a large scale and find it conflicts not at all with the commission's other functions, such as producing timber and protecting wildlife.

ALAN MATTINGLY  
Director,  
The Ramblers' Association  
London SW8

### Art in the regions

Sir: Andrew Lambirth's article "The glories of the garden" (ISM, 17 January) lucidly provided the historical context for the Royal Academy's exhibition "The Art Treasures of England", which has been selected from public art collections in the regions. However, he omitted to mention, among the bodies to which museums and galleries may turn for help in purchasing works of art, the Purchase Grant Fund.

Administered by the Victoria and Albert Museum on behalf of the Museums and Galleries Commission, this fund

was established more than a century ago solely to support acquisitions in the regions. In recent decades, for many museums and galleries, such as York City Art Gallery, with limited resources, the acquisition of any work costing more than a few hundred pounds would have been unthinkable without the support of the Purchase Grant Fund.

In the case of modest purchases such support is often 50 per cent of the cost, while the fund also plays an important role in providing partnership funding (at a lower percentage) for more ambitious purchases. The Burra and the Batoni in the current RA exhibition are just two examples of 80 purchases made by York City Art Gallery since 1961 with assistance from the fund.

RICHARD GREEN  
Curator  
York City Art Gallery

### Defence review

Sir: It is regrettable that the headline you used in the article about the Strategic Defence Review ("Forces in revolt over cost-cutting review", 22 January) gave such a misleading impression of the story below. The fact is that the criticisms detailed in the article, many of which are neither new or surprising, are directed not at the Strategic Defence Review but at the problems which we identified in opposition. I launched the review precisely to deal with these problems.

I will not comment on the details contained in the leaked document, except that it demonstrates the truly open nature of the review process. I said last year that we would consult widely and listen to what people said. That is what we are doing.

KENNETH WILSON  
Wolverhampton

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ing. No punches are being pulled in this review.

The feedback it has received underlines that we were right to make the review a foreign policy rather than a resource led process. This is not a cost-cutting exercise but a re-examination of our defence requirements from first principles. Indeed, one of the main issues at the heart of our work is the need to address overstretch on our personnel and the shortfalls in military capability inherited by this government, after very deep cuts by the last one.

The Prime Minister rightly said at the Lord Mayor's Banquet last November that we must always look for efficiency in money spent on defence, but we must not reduce our capability to exercise a role on the international stage.

The messages we are receiving from our personnel, both military and civilian, are that they want vision for defence into the next century, that people matter and that they believe the review must address these issues. I agree entirely with them. The review will provide the vision needed to underpin strong and relevant defence, based on the clear belief that people are our most important asset.

GEORGE ROBERTSON  
Secretary of State  
Ministry of Defence  
London SW1

### Cycle warning

Sir: On-the-pavement fines for cyclists? Licences and number plates (Letters, 22 January)? No, these are bureaucratic and unnecessary solutions. All a cyclist needs is to be preceded by a recognisable motor vehicle bearing a prominent red flag.

KENNETH WILSON  
Wolverhampton

### In praise of Leylandii

Sir: The hobby landscapers and weekend ecologists who denigrate Leylandii (report, 21 January) have no concept of the scale of damage which is being inflicted on the countryside by exposure, wind-blown and soil erosion.

The only trees which can hold their own in the deteriorating conditions are trees like Leylandii. They must be planted as nurse crops to enable the original indigenous species to be replanted with a chance of survival. My family and I have been able to use Leylandii to shelter plantings of hazel, elder, blackthorn and dog rose which in turn have led to recolonisation by endangered dormice, along with more common wildlife.

BRIAN GREEN  
Willingham, Cambridgeshire

Sir: America can be blamed for many things, but not the Leyland cypress. This plant first appeared as a natural hybrid between *Cupressus macrocarpa* and *Chamaecyparis nootkatensis* in Montgomeryshire in 1838, so although both parents are North American species it is only fair to attribute blame to the Welsh.

JOHN ANDERSON  
Thru, Cornwall

### Perfect purity

Sir: In Emily Passmore's interesting article on the Corbières region of France (Travel, 17 January), the spiritual leaders of the Cathar (or Albigenian) community are referred to as "perfects". This is presumably a misprint for "perfected" as they were known in French as *les parfaits* or *les bonshommes*, a group of people, mainly but not exclusively men, who had taken vows of purity and abstinence from meat and sexual activity.

This presented a contrast to many of the regular clergy of the Roman Church. I do wonder a little about the advisability of staying at Montségur, where, in 1244, the Cathars emerged after a two-year siege in their eyrie to be burned alive, *en masse*, in the village below. It would take a strong stomach not to feel haunted, however delicious the *plats du jour*.

ELIZABETH MONKHOUSE  
London NW11

### Glorious Galliano

Sir: Galliano the glorious! Galliano the genius! A most emphatic "yes". At last someone has had the courage to create a "variation on a theme" with the quality of fashions of a past age (Fashion, 21 January). Galliano's inspiration, Paul Poiret, drew his own inspiration directly from the clothes of 100 years before his time, the Directoire period. He had an empire devoted to couture, perfume, shoes, millinery and interior design. His "1002nd Night" or "Persian Celebration" of 1911 epitomised his flair for theatricality and beauty; settings were designed by Raoul Dufy and Dunoyer de Segonzac.

There is no shame in imitating a thing of beauty and taste, the only crime is in running up a saun slip and calling it couture, which seems to be the order of the day.

SIMON M O'CORRA  
London SE13

### Travel insurance

Sir: Could it be that Tony Blair, in authorising the cost of ministers taking their partners on official visits abroad, is hoping that they will avoid the kind of accusations Bill Clinton is facing?

It could be money well spent.

STEPHEN LEEKE  
Warboys, Cambridgeshire

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

We mention today the "battle of the biographies" in which our own Don Macintyre takes on the *Independent* on Sunday's Paul Routledge in rival versions of the life of Peter Mandelson. Biographing (if that's the word) politicians is one of the traditional cottage industries for Westminster journalism.

Most of the key players in New Labour have had the treatment. There's been Blair (by John Rentoul of *The Independent*) and by Jon Sopel of the BBC), John Prescott (by Colin Brown of *The Independent*) and Gordon Brown – no relation – by Routledge again. Robin Cook's life, loves and times are being prepared by a man from the *Financial Times*. Now it's Mandelson's turn.

For politicians, "getting the book" is a rite of arrival, on a par with becoming a Privy Counsellor, but better.

Some readers, however, may be wondering why so many Indy journalists are writing biographies in the first place. Is it because they are they very poor? No, is my answer to that. They are not poor enough. All our political staff are exceedingly well-paid in kind, receiving monthly parcels of rye-bread, candles, biro refills, industrial alcohol, evaporated milk and hair-oil, for which they are exceedingly grateful.

Is it because they are not working at the day job? Well, Sunday political journalists, as is well known, do very little anyway. Most of their time is spent lounging around in silk pyjamas, drinking liqueurs with their pinkies raised and discussing their love lives in tones of languid boredom. (This is particularly true of Mr Routledge.)

As for the rest, they work very hard, but save time by rarely washing or changing their clothes. No, the simple reason is that these chaps are highly talented and in great demand. Whether that is also true of their subjects, I leave the reader to judge.

Andrew Marr

## QUOTE UNQUOTE

"It will all end in tears. Most of the women will lose their seats at the next election, and the Mother of Parliaments will return, thankfully, to being the best club in London."

– Sir Julian Critchley, former Tory MP, on Blair's babes

"Poets don't build swimming pools. I'm going to spend it on the electricity bill and food."

– Don Paterson, on winning the £5,000 T S Eliot prize

"I am a well-known elitist. I don't even own a pair of trainers. If I did, I am sure they would be very fragrant."

– Lord Gowrie

"The best way to build a stone wall is at dusk and when you are slightly drunk. It really flows."

– Giles Downes, the Queen's architect

"Aromatherapy is like going into the countryside and smelling flowers. It should be available in Parliament. They already have it in some mental hospitals."

– Simon Hughes, Liberal Democrat MP



## Castro and the Pope agree on one thing – down with America!



DAVID  
AARONOVITCH  
THE CLASH  
OF ICONS

An icon is someone you can recognise from behind. William Hague and Kate Winslet, for example, are not icons; Margaret Thatcher and John Wayne certainly were. And two of the greatest extant icons came together this week on a warm, beautiful island in the Caribbean.

No, not Mick Jagger and Tina Turner on Mustique. Two great hero/villains of the second half of this century, celebrated their likely survival into the early years of the next, by meeting up, kissing each other and hanging out. The Pope and Fidel (having outlived Leonid, Margaret, Josip Broz, Kim Il Sung and Jimmy Stewart) were celebrating their own remarkable longevity. To see them together was to go on icon overload, like looking at old photographs of Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt at the Yalta conference, or enjoying a dream of Diana having dinner with Marilyn in heaven.

For one moment I had a fantasy of them swapping their iconic togs, like footballers exchange shirts at the end of a big match. Fidel would clamber into a cassock, hang the crucifix round his neck and don the skullcap. John Paul II, in turn, would fasten those fatigues, pull up the combat boots and firmly clamp a huge Havana between his dentures. Disappointingly, only one wore the full iconic regalia: the Pope turned out in snow-white Popegear, but Castro wore a dark suit. This made him look attractively winsome, as though he were a young suitor visiting his girlfriend's parents one Sunday lunchtime.

So, there they were, these two redoubtable men, icons grown old. One once represented the vigour, sexiness and hope of socialist revolution; the other the much longer tradition of the one true church. What was it that drew them together, that made their sharing of one spotlight so surprisingly comfortable?

There is, after all, one pretty bone of contention between them – God. Fidel does not believe in him, and the Pope does. And, insofar as communism has traditionally been associated with godlessness, one would expect the Cuban regime to be exactly the type of government here on earth that the Pontiff would most like to dislodge. Especially as he has been accorded a similar accolade with regard to the fall of the Berlin wall to that which *The Sun* allowed itself after the 1992 election – it was the Pope who won it.

It should not have been a surprise, therefore, to see the American magazine *Time* comment in its latest issue that "this week the Pope brings his message of freedom to Fidel Castro, as two of the world's giants collide". According to this version of the iconoclasm, Fidel is tolerating the Pope because he is desperate for recognition, and the Holy Father is there to wean weary Cubans away from communism.

This is old-fashioned, America-centric, Cold War bollocks. The idea that the Pope has a "message of freedom" is in any case bizarre. Catholicism is not about freedom, which it does not recognise as essential for the human condition. Dignity, yes. Freedom, no. The Holy Office of the Inquisition – renamed the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith – still exists today; and you can still be branded a heretic in today's church. Old Galileo was only rehabilitated in 1992, some 360 years after having been condemned; Gorbachev managed to get Bukharin rehabilitated inside 50.

But even the fact that both Cuba and the church aren't democratic isn't really the point. The fact is that, these days, there is more that can unite men like Castro and Wojtyla than must necessarily divide them. For a start, they are not as hostile to each other as an American perspective might assume. Fidel has drunk at the well of liberation theology; there are plenty of Catholics that he likes and would call comrade. His enemies are those forces that would crush him and – in his terms – destroy his country. Catholicism is not one of those forces.

Now look at the world from under the skullcap: communism, once the terrible secular threat to organised religion, is everywhere vanquished. From Italy to Argentina, from Canada to Kamchatka, there are no communists. Across the world the market reigns. So the Pope's enemy is no longer organised labour, marching to the drumbeat of a single ideology, defeated if that one ideology is defeated. In 1998 it is the far more powerful, less ideological and therefore less confrontable global system of capitalism which provides the church with its challenge.

In its global phase capitalism is raising as many ethical and spiritual questions, as it answers material ones. Across the developed world many are richer, but most are, they say, no happier. In a flicker of a computer screen whole communities are swept away, employers feel no responsibility for their employees, employees feel no loyalty to their companies. Fidel and John Paul may look at Russia, and see communism replaced with prostitution, exploitation, rampant crime and all the other ugly stepsisters of consumerism. And both do not like what they see. This is something that Americans cannot understand.

So, these two last-doddering representatives of two great ideologies, both of which contend that there is something above us, whether it be the possibility of a heaven on earth, or the certainty of a heaven in heaven, can find both common cause and sense some opportunity. Both members of a priestly caste, set to show us the path to enlightenment, they appear, in their different ways, to deeper human values. They can make us good human beings. Anything you can do, they are saying, icon do better.

## Berating politicians will not bring public money back to the arts



TREVOR  
PHILLIPS  
THE VOTERS  
CALL THE TUNE

I don't often feel sorry for politicians, but I spared a prayer the other day for Chris Smith. This week, the withdrawal of grants to one London theatre, following the Arts Council's cut in funding from the Government, has provoked a sort of Wagnerian fury, most of which has fallen around the head of the poetry-reading Secretary of State for Culture. And he was subjected to a double-pronged attack by Sir Peter Hall and Lesley Garrett while finishing the nice lunch provided by arts guru Melvyn Bragg: not the ideal mood music for your dessert.

A debate over arts funding in Britain could be a good thing. If it brings the public rushing to the artists' defence it will be marvellous. If it were, better still, to bring the public rushing to put their hands in their pockets and their bums on the seats it would be even better. Best of all, if it persuades our politicians to force the arts higher on the list of the Treasury's priorities, then we enter the kingdom of heaven. However, there is a long way to go before that happens.

What accomplished artists at the top of their professions, such as Sir Peter and Miss Garrett, may not have grasped is that, sadly, their genius for combining artistic achievement and pulling power is exceptional. For the most part, the publicly supported arts world does not manage both tricks at the same time. That is why they need public funds. But in order to gain public funds at a higher level, we need to win over the public and howls of outrage at a popular government are not the best start.

This may provoke renewed cries of "Uriah Heep"; but I think that genuine supporters of the arts can see that there is little mileage in being stupidly bulge. It may make for marvellous speeches; but life is not a play, and rhetoric will not make much difference to the opportunities open to real artists in the real world. There are a few home truths that need to be registered if we are to have any hope of improving the



Peter Hall (left) at 'The South Bank Show' Awards, where he lectured Chris Smith (middle) Photograph: PA

appalling position of artists and arts organisations.

First, the fact that people come to cultural events, whether film, theatre, visual arts or music, does not mean that they think that the taxpayer should provide more money for these activities. All the signs are that the public does wonder why it has to back artists in this way. New voices in Parliament mutter that there is no reason why the public should support opera or theatre, when football has to make its own way; and they do not all come from the uneducated Tory right. It is not good enough to shout "philistine" or "brute"; this is not a convincing argument when used against a smart-sounding New Labour government that includes one of our greatest actresses. It also sounds utterly hypocritical from people who told us only a year ago that New Labour would save the nation. What are people to make of the principles of those who squeal when they find that their particular vested interest is not first in the queue for rescue? Were we in the arts asleap when Gordon Brown promised to continue Tory spending policies?

Second, it is true that several years of stand-still funding have left many arts organisations on the verge of collapse, desperately searching for more and more crowd-pleasing (and often unadventurous) ways of making the books balance. But it is also true that hardly anyone asks whether we need the number of arts organisations we have, or whether they are the right sorts of institutions for the 21st century.

The Greenwich Theatre, for example, has over the past two years swallowed more than half-a-million pounds of public money. Its board, which includes some outstanding people who know about theatre, could hardly be regarded as novices or incompetents. Yet, audiences have fallen steadily, and the deficit has risen to over £200,000, with no sign of either trend being reversed. In spite of some critical success, on average fewer than three out of 10 seats were filled by paying customers last year. The audience for the kind of theatre put on at Greenwich has disappeared from south-east London, and no matter how many big names are imported, this is no longer a viable proposition.

Third, the fact that an arts organisation once had public funding does not mean that it should retain it for ever. Unless governments were able to guarantee a larger proportion of public money for the arts every single year, that would mean that no new artists could ever gain access to public support. That doesn't leave much room for the emerging talents from, say, the minority communities who do not want to do theatre or music the way it has traditionally been done, and do not want to have to rely on a white sponsor to get their work done. The funding system has to be able to refresh itself: as some come in, others must go out.

Fourth, don't let's be snuffy about the role of non-Treasury funds. The contribution to bringing on new talent in the partnership between the London Arts Board and Sir Cameron Mackintosh is a lifeline to many

of the capital's young artists; and writing as chairman of the LAB, I can cheerfully say that anyone else who wants to put up money for artists and arts organisations can call me up any time. But we should not rest our hopes on the much-hoped-for lottery pot of gold; new legislation may well make it possible to use lottery cash for people instead of palaces – as ever, demand will dwarf supply.

Finally, there may be a belief that like most previous governments, ministers in this one will back down once they realise – shock, horror, gasp – that they may not be invited to opening nights if they don't roll over. Forget it. Even if they believed that, the big men in this Government probably wouldn't care much; they buy their own tickets and are proud of it. This lot will not be frightened by anyone except the voters.

And that perhaps is where we all need to turn our attention. Berating people who have been elected to do what they are doing simply suggests arrogance. The case for public investment is not yet made in spite of the gallant efforts of many – the National Campaign for the Arts, for example. Shouldn't all the glamorous firepower be directed towards creating a compelling case for the arts being funded with public money? No-

body argues about money for libraries, even when they are late in being built, and the shelves don't work. The same could not be said about the opera. We need, as a prerequisite, to show that we are managing the arts effectively and efficiently; and that where the public's money is being used it is being used to back work that is high quality and innovative.

But the overriding case for public investment in the arts is not economic, or social, or political; it is not even the value of the arts themselves. All of these reasons could equally be supported by private donations. No, the case lies in the simple fact that, as a society, we need artists to tell us our own story, to make sense of the world we are in and to reflect our values and morals in a variety of ways. But if we are to have this done honestly, and without the hand of political or commercial despots inserting a distorting lens between the artist and the audience, there must be untainted backing from a neutral source, and the Treasury is as close as we'll come to it. The real case for public investment in the arts is not that it makes our society rich or that it keeps artists supplied with canvas and oils; it is that it is the only hope of keeping us honest about ourselves.

## If it's got a plug on the end of it, Bill Gates wants a piece of it



CHARLES  
ARTHUR  
WHO CAN STOP  
MICROSOFT?

"Microsoft may bid for BT" said the morning papers yesterday. The story hummed around the stock exchanges for hours. It looked as though Bill Gates – you know, the other Bill, the unpopular one who also lives in Washington, not the district of Columbia but the state – might become the man on the end of the phone. It wasn't true, as it turned out, but it was frightening for a few hours.

After all, nobody outside the computer industry cares very much if Netscape – a bunch of programmers who wear their baseball caps backwards, do their work and order pizzas at

3am, and live in Silicon Valley – gets rolled over by Bill Gates's behemoth, do they? And nobody really minds if countless smaller software rivals find they either do things Microsoft's way or don't do them at all. That's the way of the market, people say.

But suggest that Bill Gates might own BT, and you change the game. If you picked up the phone, would the dialling tone still be saying "Brrrrr"? Or would it be "Biiiiiiiiiiiiiiii"? And just "Moneyyyyyyy"? And, cynics might ask, would it crash all the time?

The rumour wasn't true, but it helps put the raging battles in the computer world into a worrying perspective. If we only perceive computers as things we use at work, and occasionally at home, to do particular tasks, it doesn't seem very threatening if Microsoft takes them over. Word processing? Who cares if the program is by Microsoft or Nichemarket Software?

But when you start thinking about the way telecommunications changes business, and you think about the way that Microsoft uses its size to tilt any playing field it gets on to in its favour, then you realise that if Microsoft did swallow BT, that tuna steak really could end up

dearer. Did the computers that supermarkets use to work out their orders use Microsoft software, which crashed and sent the trolley with the fish to Llandudno instead of London? So sorry.

Least this sound too fanciful (as the rumours were), let me quote Gates earlier this week, when he admitted his company had had talks with telecoms companies: "All we need to do is take Windows [software] and extend it so that it can be the base for telephony... and find out what the communications industry needs in order for Windows NT [another Microsoft operating system] to be a key building block."

Note that phrase, "key building block". That's where Gates wants to be – holding everything up, controlling the toll bridge for software. This is a company which wants so much to control your life that later this year it is introducing a chip-powered children's toy, Interactive Barney, which "talks and sings along with your video and PC". (Of course, if your home computer isn't running Windows, your purchase will be in vain.)

Would-be rivals will always be behind the game because Microsoft, being a single com-

pany, always has the commercial edge of knowing what it is planning next. That's the power of monopoly, as any Monopoly player learns: when you own all the squares, you don't mind who lands on them, because they always end up paying you.

The idea of competition being shut out has led many Americans – usually so ready to applaud success – to oppose the idea that Microsoft might spread its tentacles any further. Some have developed a visceral hatred for Gates, which can't have come from a few annoying computer crashes. While the US Department of Justice sort of "won" part of its anti-trust lawsuit yesterday – with Microsoft agreeing not to twist PC manufacturers' arms to make them install its Internet browser – the wider game is not over.

"In the real world, Microsoft has already succeeded in installing Netscape," said Gary Arlen, a technology analyst. "The damage may have already been done. Microsoft may have already accomplished its goal in defeating its competitors."

So people are asking: since the Department of Justice has signally failed to close the Gates, is there some computing innovation on the way that will have the same effect?

Perhaps. While the computer industry may be relatively young, we have been here before. IBM used to be the one constantly fighting the US Department of Justice, forever signing anti-trust "consent decrees". IBM dominated. Then, in 1982, the PC came along. (Ironically, it was IBM that moved the PC from the hobbyist's garage and on to the corporate desktop.) IBM thought hardware would be the key; it turned out that was easy to make – software is the really valuable stuff. Microsoft won.

Now, some people are tempted to think that a programming language called "Java" could be the undoing of Microsoft, could turn back the Microsoft tide and Bill Gates's wish to have his software run on every computer, everywhere.

Unfortunately, if Java is the answer, then the question must be a pretty silly one. Java is a computer programming language – like Cobol, Basic, Fortran, Pascal, Lisp. More prosaically, Web surfers will know it as "that thing on Web sites which crashes your computer".

Java doesn't try to replace Windows, or any operating system. It just lets computers connected over a network run the same programs, no matter what

the chips or operating systems inside them are. It's a way of doing things in spread-out systems.

Interestingly, Microsoft has tried to co-opt it and create its own "standard" Java, which of course only does things on Microsoft-based machines. Perhaps Gates does see it as a threat. Certainly Larry Ellison, head of the enormous database company Oracle, has touted Java and an idea called the "network computer" (essentially a PC, but without a hard disc) as the way to strangle Microsoft. It's not going to happen, because even if your TV metamorphoses into a computer it will still need an operating system underneath – and Microsoft will determinedly wedge itself in.

While it's tempting to hope, Micawber-like, that "something will turn up" that will rebuff Gates, it's likely to be something as lateral, as unobvious, as the PC was. At the time, that was thought to be another string in IBM's all-embracing bow, another building block. It turned out to be the thread that unravelled its power. Perhaps something is coming; but in the meantime, people will be cheering the Department of Justice on and jeering every time Bill Gates whines, "But we only want to compete!"

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## Chaim Bermant

Chaim Icyk Bermant, writer, born Breslev, Poland 26 February 1929; married 1962 Judy Weil (two sons, two daughters); died London 20 January 1998.

Nobody - rabbi, scholar or politician - was as central to British Jewish life as Chaim Bermant. Over two decades, his "On the Other Hand" column was the centrepiece of the *Jewish Chronicle*. As such, it provided both stability and controversy. He brought into focus the preoccupations, follies and foibles of a disparate yet distinctive minority. Although this minority almost wilfully failed to cohere in other respects, every week it united in devouring - whether with relish or indignation - the Bermant column.

His ability to achieve this was based upon a style that, for all its earthy and conversational qualities, was consistently elegant. The magic ingredient was humour. He had a warmth and a wit that enabled him to convey profound sentiments with the lightest of touches.

The product of a rigidly orthodox upbringing, he was by temperament and intellectual inclination both flexible and liberal. He was drenched in traditional Judaism and retained a love for it throughout his life. If ever a Jew advanced the spirit of his religion above the letter of religious law, it was Chaim Bermant. In an age of doubt, in which Bermant often found himself on the side of the sceptics and agnostics against those empowered to speak with authority on Jewish religious teaching, he was sometimes asked about his own beliefs. "I believe in Judaism," he would reply, "but not in rabbis."

This was a telling remark for someone whose father had been a rabbi, originally in Eastern Europe, where Chaim was born in 1929, in Breslev in a part of Poland subject to frequent border changes. In 1933, the family moved to a small, largely Jewish village in Latvia, where Chaim's father found himself in charge of both of the two local synagogues. This experience prompted Bermant to recall, in relation to the custom of celebrating two-day Jewish holidays in the Diaspora, that he had always thought this was "so that one rabbi could minister to two congregations".

In 1938, the Bermants came to Glasgow where, after school, the young Chaim taught for a

while in Hebrew classes. One of his pupils was Cyril Harris, today the Chief Rabbi of South Africa. This was achieved the final leaving of the unique Bermant accent - Polish-Lithuanian-Latvian-Yiddish-Scottish - in which short, staccato phrases issued through an equally complex arrangement of facial hair, itself consistently at risk from the sparks and smoke of a dangling, untipped cigarette.

An ardent, though far from uncritical, Zionist, Bermant spent several prolonged periods in Israel. He tried kibbutz life in the early 1950s and, after marrying the painter Judy Weil, twice tried to transfer his family life to the Holy Land - in the 1970s and 1980s. However, he found it holier in Hampstead Garden Suburb, upon which he frequently bestowed Eden-like qualities in print.

After higher education at Glasgow University and the LSE, he became a schoolteacher between 1955 and 1957, before joining Scottish TV and then Granada, where he worked for Sidney Bernstein alongside Jeremy Isaacs. Had it not been for that impenetrable accent, he would doubtless have appeared more often than he did in front of the cameras. As it was, he showed considerable flair as a television dramatist with *Pews* (1980), a play about a non-Jew mischievously conscripted into a quorum for Jewish prayer.

He was a skilled writer of fiction and non-fiction, with 30 books to his credit. His novels, including *Jericho Sleep Alone* (1964), *Bert Make Tea* (1965) and *Now Newman Was Old* (1978) were small masterpieces of sympathetic humour. His non-fiction works, including the acclaimed account of leading Anglo-Jewish families, *The Cousinhood* (1971) and a biography, in 1990, of the emeritus Chief Rabbi Lord Jakobovits, were invariably informative and readable.

He joined the staff of the *Jewish Chronicle* in 1961 and three years later became its features editor. But office routine was a constraint and he embarked upon a freelance life in 1966. In the following three decades he wrote for a number of newspapers, notably the *Observer* and the *Daily Telegraph*, with great eloquence and some versatility - he once briefly wrote a food column.

But his motivation and his milieu were quintessentially Jewish, and his principal public platform was the *Jewish Chronicle*. His knowledge and background gave him the authority to expose intolerance and absurdities wherever they occurred, even within the most observant of religious circles. His powers of expression - as potent as any journalist writing in this country - made such exposure effective. He despised fanaticism, blinkered intolerance and injustice and was able to attack examples of them without recourse to vitriol. He was also capable of fond praise and lyrical reflection.

- Gerald Jacobs



Letting slip his private persona: Eden in the field in Guyana, 1993

Photograph: Rob Potter

## Michael J. Eden

Michael John Eden, geographer, born Brechley, Kent 10 December 1936; Lecturer, Bedford College (later Royal Holloway, University of London) 1964-94, Senior Lecturer 1994-98; died Berkhamsstead, Hertfordshire 11 January 1998.

Michael J. Eden was a concerned environmentalist long before such a title and role became fashionable. His work on tropical ecology and land management in Venezuela, Colombia, Guyana, Brazil and Papua New Guinea established him internationally. He was also well-known for his forays into remote sensing (viewing the Earth from satellite images) in relation to the evaluation of tropical land cover and management practices.

Eden was an experienced and proficient field worker in tropical regions. He was *Leader* of the Geographical Magazine Hoverscraft Expedition to Amazonas in 1968, Scientific Leader of the Colombian Amazonian Expedition of 1977, and a member of the Royal Geographical Society's Maraca Rainforest Project between 1985 and 1987.

His book *Ecology and Land Management in Amazonia* was published in 1990. Reviewing it in the *Geographical Journal*, Professor Nigel Smith concluded that it was "the best book on Amazonian development available".

Eden was appointed to a Lectureship in the Department of Geography at Bedford College, London, in 1964, where in those early years he contributed to teaching on first-year climatology, aspects of geomorphology and Latin America. In the courses that he taught subsequently, on tropical ecological systems and tropical forest ecology and management (he remained at the college, through its various incarnations, until his death), he captivated a generation of undergraduate students.

Michael Eden was born in 1936, the son of a Methodist minister, whom he outlived by little more than a year. Following his schooling at Kingswood School, in Bath, he undertook National Service as a Pilot Officer in the Royal Air Force before going up to Christ Church, Oxford, in 1958 to read Geography. He worked as a soil surveyor attached to the

Water and Power Development Authority in West Pakistan before taking an MSc at McGill University. His thesis was published in 1964 as *The Savanna Ecosystem: Northern Rupununi, British Guiana* - the first publication in the McGill Savanna Research Series. Whilst undertaking this field project, he also served as the Director of McGill's field research station in British Guiana (now Guyana).

Eden was the quintessential English gentleman, kind, dignified, self-effacing, and with a dry sense of humour which took a while to decipher. He came into his own when in the field in the tropics, or at one of the many meetings of Commonwealth geographers which he arranged or attended. Far from the conventions and restrictions of institutional life, Mike Eden let slip his very private persona. His workshops were always academically productive, and led to the publication of his two major works, *Sensing and Tropical Land Management* (1986) and *Land Degradation in the Tropics* (1996), both co-prepared with Professor John Parry.

As for his teaching, Eden instructed from first-hand experience. Clear and lucid, he exemplified the traditional virtues of the university educator. He was unequivocal in stressing that he could not see how anyone could persist in university teaching unless they had a lasting commitment to communicate successfully with students.

Eden preferred the humid tropics to what he regarded as the increasing aridity of university administration. When he did undertake administrative tasks, he did so with quiet efficiency. From 1979 to 1988 he was a devoted Treasurer and European representative on the Committee of Management of the Commonwealth Geographical Bureau. After major surgery for cancer some five years ago, Eden came full circle to research once again in Guyana. He was examining the sustainability of silviculture in the country's interior. Last May, he organised and chaired a successful one-day meeting on land development issues in Guyana at Royal Holloway, University of London. He had commitments and plans for ongoing research when his brain tumour was diagnosed.

- Robert B. Potter

## Roly Wason

Cathcart Roly Wason, archaeologist, lens grinder, bus driver and writer; born Cossington, Somerset 2 April 1907; married 1935 Margherita Lamb (died 1992; three sons); died Taunton, Somerset 6 January 1998.

Roly Wason was one of the great Cambridge intellectuals of the era preceding the likes of Anthony Blunt and Kim Philby and, as with them, his political thinking changed radically from the cosy conversation into which he was born towards Marxism; but, not as with them, he remained loyal to his country.

Wason was born in Cossington, Somerset, in 1907. But, although he also spent the last year of his life there, he felt as much at home in Scotland; his grand- and great-grandfathers were Eugene Wason and Peter Rigby Wason, Scottish Liberal MPs (the latter was a promoter of the 1832 Reform Bill and co-founder of the Reform Club). And when his mother, the daughter of the founder of the Invalid Children's Aid Association (now I-CAN), died nursing the wounded in France in the First World War, and his rear-admiral father was at sea, he was brought up in Abingdon, Oxfordshire. It was this love of Scotland, and his deep understanding of the class system, that led to the publication in 1976 of his radical interpretation of Scottish history *Rebel Scotland*.

Wason's academic brilliance was slow to gain recognition, however. He often joked that his tutor at Rugby School was delighted whenever his marks were only just below those of the worst performer in his form, but he went on to become head boy and then a leading student at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, whence he graduated with first class honours with distinction in Latin, Greek and Ancient History.

It was his love of Classics and Scotland that led to his meeting in Edinburgh with Margaret ("Margherita") Lamb. They eloped to Gretna Green, where they were married on 7 January 1935. To appease disconcerted parents they were married again at a registry office and finally in church. This hat-trick of weddings seemed to work - they were parted only by Margherita's death 57 years later.

During Wason's time as Professor of Archaeology at the University of Toronto, and Keeper of Near Eastern Antiquities at the Royal Ontario Museum, a position he had taken up at the tender age of 24, and Margherita's research for her PhD thesis, "Class Struggles in Ancient Greece", the couple began travels and adventures that they continued in three phases of their lives. In the late 1920s and 1930s, they explored the whole of Europe, particularly the Soviet bloc, Greece and the Balkans. Travelling always by car (Frazer Nash, Lagonda, Bugatti, even on one occasion a 1902 de Dion Bouton), staying always in their rudimentary tent, they came to

be known and respected as much by the brigands of Albania as by the intelligentsia of Greece.

Then, from the mid-1950s to the late 1960s, they retraced their steps with their three young sons, taking camping equipment, clothes and provisions for up to six weeks at a time, on a motorcycle and sidecar. After their retirement in the Seventies, they travelled overland to Nepal and Bangladesh, and the central Asian states of the then Soviet Union.

Wason remained true to his beliefs throughout his life. After only a year at Toronto, and a brief tenure as Lecturer in Classical Archaeology at Edinburgh University, he abandoned teaching students interested more in gaining a degree than in archaeology. When, in 1938, he became Organiser for the County of Argyll Labour Party, he rejected offers of parliamentary posts, seeing them as corruptly motivated. Rather, he became an expert lens grinder at Barr and Stroud in Glasgow where, as a shop steward, he set up the most efficient socialist network seen on Clydeside.

After an unsuccessful attempt at fruit farming in Somerset, he took up a post in 1953 as works manager at the engineering firm, Richards & Timmins, and moved his young family to Hartlepool. When, within months, the firm became yet another victim of the 1950s recession, he and Mar-



Wason: true to his beliefs

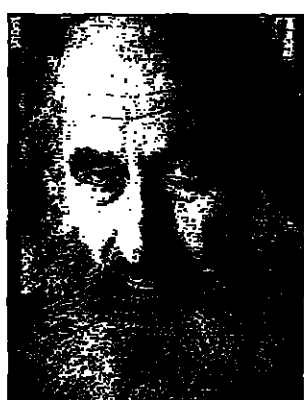
gherita became bus conductors for West Hartlepool Corporation Transport - the North-East's most over-qualified "dippies". Roly went on to drive a bus for five years from 1953, and delighted his passengers, particularly the children, with stories, poems and jokes colourfully recounted in his book *Busman's View* (1958).

Roly and Margherita Wason returned to teaching for the last 15 years of their working lives, first at the Frederick Nattrass School in Norton-on-Tees, then at Stevenage College, before retiring to Somerset. Here Roly concluded his theory of the lessons to be learned from patterns that have occurred on at least half a dozen occasions through the history of civilisation, as told in his parables, *The Sons of War*, which have not yet been published. He was beginning to communicate this message to his correspondents on the Internet on his first computer, which he acquired on his 90th birthday.

- Graham Wason

Gulzarilal Nanda, politician, died Ahmadabad, India 16 January, aged 99. Interim prime minister of India twice, first

when Jawaharlal Nehru died in office in 1964, and again when his successor Lal Bahadur Shastri died in 1966.



Bermant: 'I believe in Judaism, but not in rabbis' Photograph: Ken Sharp

## BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

### DEATHS

**JOHNSTONE** Marguerite, formerly of Harpenden, aged 88, peacefully at Capwell Grange Nursing Home, Luton. Widow of Maurice, beloved mother of Primrose and David. Funeral at Garston Crematorium Friday 30 January 3pm. Donations to cancer research.

**Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS** (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1, Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 071-293 2002 (24-hour answering machine 071-293 2001) or faxed to 071-293 2000 and are charged at £4.50 a line (VAT extra). **OTHER** Gazette announcements (notices, functions, forthcoming marriages, marriages) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

### Changing of the Guard

**TODAY:** The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. **TOMORROW:** The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. **WEDNESDAY:** The Grenadier Guards mount the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am. Band provided by the Irish Guards.

### Forthcoming marriages

**Mr T. J. Keer and Ms J. L. Gallant.** The engagement is announced between Tim, son of the late Major John Keer and of Mrs Patrick Jackson, of St Albans, Hertfordshire, and Jeri, elder daughter of Mr Norman Gallant, of Southfield, Michigan, USA, and of Mrs Sylvia Goldfarb, of Bingham Farms, Michigan.

### Birthdays

**Mr Ernest Borgnine**, actor, 81; **Li-Gem Sir Anthony Denison-Smith**, former GOC, 4th Division, 56; **Mr Neil Diamond**, singer and songwriter, 57; **Mr Bamber Gascoigne**, author and quizmaster, 63; **Miss Nastassja Kinski**, actress, 37; **Dr Desmond Morris**, zoologist, 70; **Sir Donald Murray**, a former Lord Justice of Appeal, Supreme Court of Northern Ireland, 75; **Dr Ian Oliver**, Chief Constable, Grampian, 58; **Miss Jane Somerville**, consultant physician, 65; **The Most Rev John Aloysius Ward**, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cardiff, 69; **Air Commodore Sir Archie Winskill**, former captain of the Queen's Flight, 81.

### Anniversaries

**Births:** Edith Newbold (Jones) Wharton, novelist, 1862. **Deaths:** Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill, statesman, 1965. **On this day:** the first train passed over the Forth Bridge, 1890. **Today is the Feast Day of St Babylas of Antioch, St Felician of Foligno, St Francis of Sales and St Macedonius the Barley-eater.**

## FAITH & REASON

### Gunmen sheltering in the shadow of the Cross

**It is no good for the churches in Northern Ireland to wring their hands over sectarian killings, says Paul Handley, Editor of the Church Times. The violence is their fault.**

Last week was a pretty spectacular week for Christian unity. On Monday the Irish National Liberation Army and (probably) the Ulster Freedom Fighters acted in concert. They both killed somebody. Just to prove this wasn't a fluke, on Wednesday they did it again.

Of course, Christianity is not the sole, nor even the chief, reason why a carpet salesman, a taxi driver and three others now lie dead, but it is deeply implicated in any sectarian act in Northern Ireland. If the gunmen aren't adherents, their parents most likely are, and their neighbours, and the various people who formed their character and opinions. And if, by the slightest chance, none of these had been touched by faith, there are so

many believers in the province and on the mainland, that the violence should have been stopped long ago.

Not, on balance, a good moment, then, in the history of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which this is. It is 90 years since the idea of such a week was first tried out, and you would be forgiven for asking what, if anything, all those prayers for all those years had achieved. But never mind the 90 years: the search for Christian unity stretches back nearly 2,000 years, to those awkward commands of Jesus and Paul which suggest (to paraphrase) that any team which can't handle unity is heading for relegation. It's not Kenny Dalglish who should be worried about keeping his job, but George Carey, John Paul II and all the rest.

For an *aide-memoire* to those biblical sayings, one need only look down the list of texts chosen by the ecumenical group which prepares study material for Christian unity week, 1967 - "Called to one hope"; 1970 - "We are fellow workers for God"; 1984 - "Called to be one"; 1989

- "One body in Christ"; 1990 - "That they all may be one".

Why does this make such depressing reading? Because if everybody had taken the first week seriously, they wouldn't have needed any more. The text for 1996 was "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." It doesn't seem to have occurred to anybody that Christ might actually like a door or two to be opened.

It would be unfair to suggest that nothing has happened. There are now hundreds of examples of local churches of different denominations sharing buildings and resources, sometimes even ministers. Even so, at the national and international level, the churches really aren't any closer together. So many of the stories one hears about local co-operation are appended with the plea: "but don't tell the bishop/archdeacon/powers that be". And while people are being shot simply because they happen to be Catholics or Protestants, such acts of ecumenical politeness look pretty feeble.

The Church's disunity makes me

think of a milkman. For years he has been delivering milk to the same street, patiently and with resignation putting up with his customers' changing tastes in bottles, cartons, silver-red, gold- and blue-top. Their grumbles persist, however, and provoke a couple of neighbours at the end of the street to start smashing each other's bottles on the doorstep. Fortunately for the Church, the milkman will continue to call for as long as somebody in the street wants him ("Behold, I stand at the door and ring for your order"). But having seen the antics of his customers - the grumblers as well as the bottle-smashers - is it any wonder that newcomers to the street are taking their coffee black?

And then there are the people who buy their milk from a supermarket. There are now many churches which thrive partly because they refuse to get involved in the confused, time-consuming, unrewarding business of getting institutions to merge. They can demonstrate the beneficial effect of concentrating all their efforts into the real task of the Church, which is

saving souls, and can point to all the enthusiastic new people they have attracted. And as long as the mainstream churches are so half-hearted about unity, these exclusive brethren cannot be contradicted.

This is a paradox, since their response to disunity is so far from being a solution that it is actually the problem. No church separates itself from others because it thinks itself worse than they are but because it wants to be superior: this is the root cause of sectarianism. And sectarianism, cross-fertilised with the wrong cultural, social and political elements, leads to violence.

And so we return to the situation in Northern Ireland and the matter of Christian culpability. For all their head-wringing, it is only when the Presbyterian and Roman Catholic Churches are working more seriously for unity that they can legitimately pray for an end to the killing. Until then, they should apologise for it.

*'Faith & Reason' is edited by Paul Valley*







## Revenue says sorry for sending out tax bills a week before payment deadline

The Inland Revenue yesterday issued its first apology over its new self-assessment system, admitting it was still sending out tax bills a week before the final deadline for payment. Andrew Verity reports.

Accountants estimate that hundreds of thousands of taxpayers are still awaiting tax bills - even though they sent in their tax

returns by the first deadline, on 30 September. If payments are not made by 31 January, the Revenue will demand a surcharge worth 5 per cent of the tax owed.

The Revenue promised last year that taxpayers who returned their forms by that date would get a tax bill before 31 January. But there are now widespread complaints that taxpayers are being left with too little time to pay their bills.

A spokeswoman for the Revenue said: "If taxpayers are still receiving tax bills we

apologise for that because it was our intention that they should have them for the beginning of this month."

The Revenue said it was reviewing its arrangements for posting material en masse in the future. It claims the problem is confined to tax agents who have promised to handle every detail of their clients' affairs.

There are an estimated 3 million people who have still not yet returned their assessment forms and the Revenue forecasts

that up to 1.3 million may face surcharges.

But evidence from taxpayers suggests those who sent in tax forms before 30 September are also getting their tax bills late. They face interest on their tax bill as well as a 5 per cent surcharge.

Chas Roy-Chowdhury, senior officer at the Association of Certified Chartered Accountants, said: "A lot of people who got their tax bills in before 30 September are still only getting their tax bills now. It is cutting things a bit fine."

The Association of Certified Chartered Accountants yesterday wrote to the Inland Revenue urging officials to show flexibility when payments were late. "The matter has been dealt with in a less than expeditious manner. We want to know where the Revenue stands on late payments resulting from the delays," said Mr Roy-Chowdhury.

The Revenue spokeswoman said taxpayers were free to appeal if they were charged for being late with their first

payment. But there would be no waiving of interest charges for being late. "If a taxpayer feels there is some reason why we should have got to them sooner they can make an appeal against any cost being levied. But the fact that they don't have their tax bill need not mean they cannot make the payment," she said.

The Revenue admitted it had problems with its computer system for processing self-assessment accounts, designed by American computer giant EDS.

## Growth slows but interest rate picture remains uncertain

The economy slowed more than expected as 1997 drew to a close, according to preliminary official figures. Yet even with the leading "dove" on the Monetary Policy Committee sounding the alarm about Asian spillovers, the jury was still out on interest rates, says Diane Coyle, Economics Editor.

National output rose by just 0.5 per cent in the final quarter of 1997, slowing from its 0.8 per cent gain the previous quarter to a pace close to the long-run trend. The forecast was for 0.6 per cent. The economy grew 3.3 per cent in the year as a whole, compared with 2.6 per cent in 1996. The Office for National Statistics said.

"The figures are frustratingly inconclusive as far as the interest rate debate is concerned," said Kevin Gardiner, an economist at Morgan Stanley.

Analysts were fairly evenly split about the chance of a quarter-point increase in the cost of borrowing from the present level of 7.25 per cent in February or March. Although some indicators of growth are pointing down, there is enough evidence of pending inflationary pressure to sow uncertainty.

This was not dispersed by DeAnne Julius, who confirmed her reputation as the most dovish member of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee on interest rates by suggesting that the Asian crisis could trim UK growth by 0.5 to 0.75 per cent. Although it is suggested she will be arguing against a rate rise in the meeting on 4-5 February, many City experts were surprised at the gloominess of her view.

Her comments came as the Treasury announced that Asia will be high on the agenda of the meeting of G7 finance min-

isters and central bankers in London next month, and also at forthcoming EU meetings.

Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer, wrote to Michel Camdessus, managing director of the International Monetary Fund, asking him to attend an EU finance ministers' meeting. He wrote: "European countries have a very substantial interest in the successful resolution of the current financial difficulties in Asia."

Mr Brown also put forward some ideas for handling future crises, including promoting more transparency in economic data and paying more attention to financial stability in emerging markets. He wrote: "I hope we might begin to draw some lessons for the future from what has happened."

Ms Julius, the only member of the MPC to have come from industry, said in her BBC radio interview yesterday: "Given the strong state of the economy at present, that's nowhere near recession levels."

She also downplayed alarmist fears about deflation, saying: "It's too early to declare

that the battle against inflation is over and that now the chief enemy is deflation."

Ms Julius' remarks followed a speech by Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, earlier in the week saying risks to growth from the Asian crisis were "heavily on the downside".

Michael Saunders, UK economist at Salomon Brothers, said: "I think there probably will not be a rise, but you can see it's going to be a very close decision."

Stephen Lewis, chief economist at Monument Derivatives, said the Asian factor had probably put all the G7 central banks on hold at least until after the meeting of finance ministers and central bankers late next month.

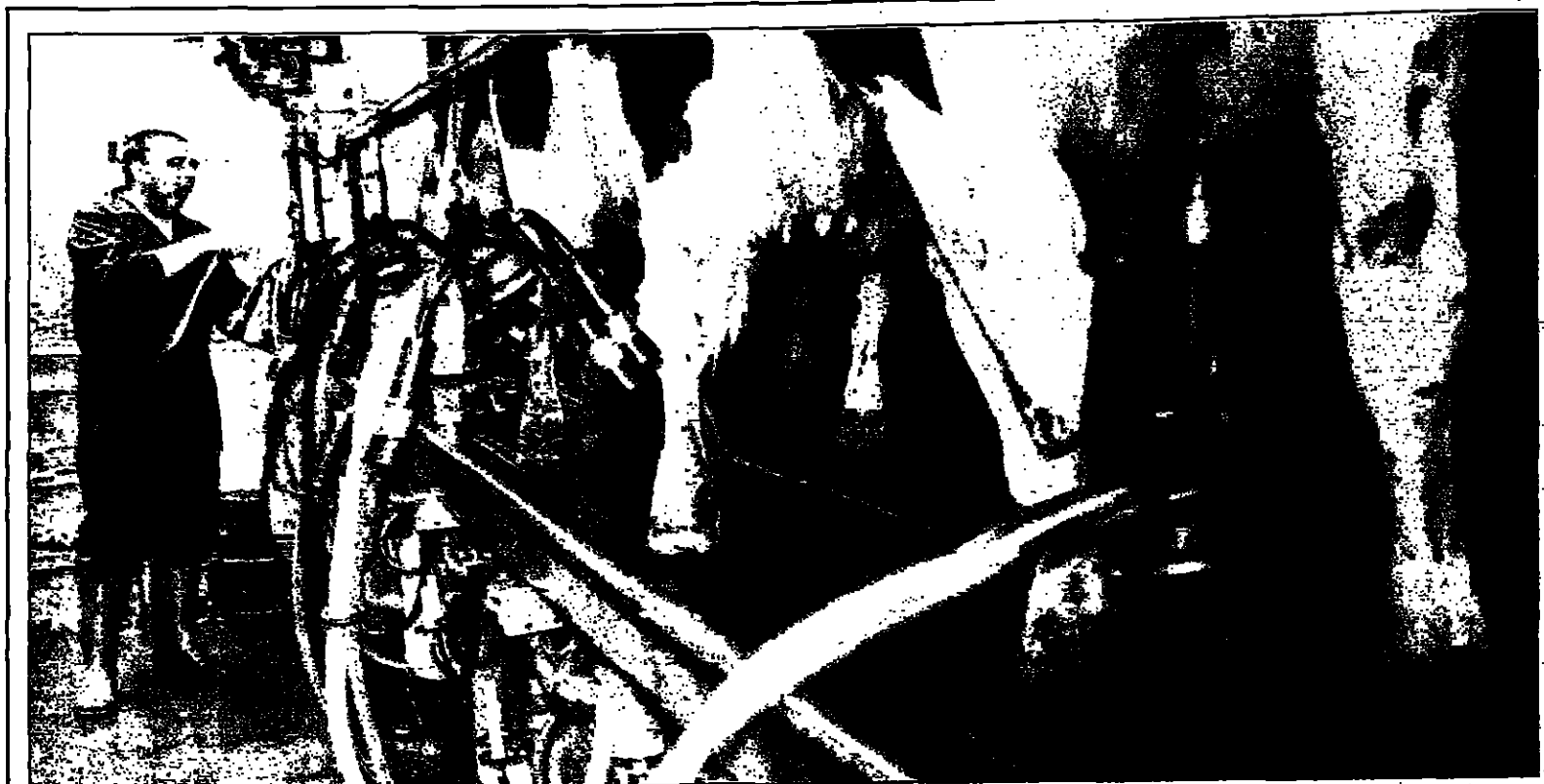
And David Hillier of Barclays Capital said: "DeAnne Julius is clearly not convinced of the need for a further rate rise, but she is probably in a minority."

The uncertainty was reflected in the markets, with the pound slightly weaker, mainly due to the dollar. The US currency fell against the yen as hopes emerged that the Japanese government would soon move to boost the flagging economy.

Yesterday's preliminary estimates showed that service sector output picked up slightly during the three months, while manufacturing, energy supply and mining were all weaker.

The ONS said the decline in manufacturing output was very small, whereas electricity, oil and gas output was markedly weaker because of the mild weather.

The fact that the official figures for manufacturing output were so subdued was regarded with caution, given the more upbeat signals from business surveys for December. On Thursday the British Chambers of Commerce reported that manufacturing deliveries and orders had actually risen in the final quarter of last year.



Northern Foods is considering the demerger of its dairy operations in a move that could trigger further consolidation in Britain's declining doorstep delivery milk business. Analysts said the decision could be the final push for shareholder value by Christopher Haskins, Northern's chairman, who is due to retire in two years' time and could even spark a bid for the company.

Northern Foods said the demerger of its dairy business had been under consideration for

## Northern Foods ponders dairy operations demerger

some time and was "currently at an advanced stage". The company said it had made the announcement following the recent rise in its share price.

Northern Foods has long said the UK dairy industry is in need of consolidation as the doorstep delivery business is

in long-term decline and the supply of milk to supermarkets is a cut-throat operation with low margins.

Analysts said Northern's dairy business could be worth £400-£500m as a separate publicly quoted company. The division made profits of £44.8m

on sales of £789m last year and is expected to improve profits to £60m this year. The company has re-structured the business, closing bottling plants and reducing capacity.

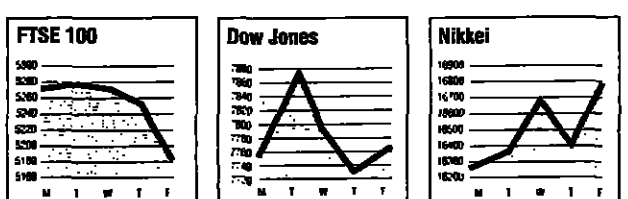
"I think it is puzzling given we have not seen any public debate about this," said

Mark Duffy at SBC Warburg Dillon Reed. "It is difficult to see what is driving the demerger argument."

It is possible that rival dairy groups may bid for Northern's dairy division ahead of demerger. Some industry experts said a demerger could represent a "turning point" for Northern and for Mr Haskins, who has been at the company for 35 years.

Northern Foods shares closed 8p higher 288p. - Nigel Cope

### STOCK MARKETS



Indices	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	5181.40	-71.70	-1.37	5387.30	4189.10	3.39
FTSE 250	4806.80	-6.40	-0.13	4963.80	4384.20	3.24
FTSE 350	2489.40	-28.60	-1.14	2570.50	2075.70	3.37
FTSE All Share	2432.02	-26.23	-1.07	2507.68	2056.07	3.34
FTSE SmallCap	2367.20	-1.40	-0.06	2407.40	2182.70	2.98
FTSE Floating	1283.40	-0.80	-0.06	1346.50	1225.20	3.26
FTSE AIM	976.90	-0.60	-0.06	1158.00	965.50	1.08
Dow Jones	7659.35	-58.00	-0.75	8299.03	6356.78	1.78
Nikkei	16789.11	383.42	2.34	20910.79	14488.21	0.91
Hong Kong	8920.20	36.47	0.41	16820.31	7909.13	4.76
Dax	4237.31	17.06	0.40	4459.89	2984.08	1.85

### INTEREST RATES

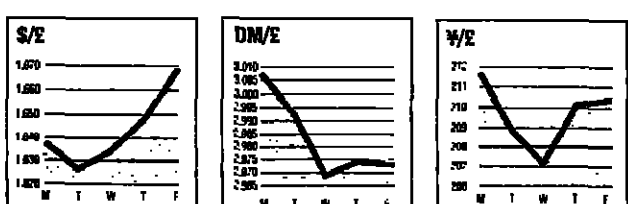


Money Market Rates	3 month	1 year	1 yr chg	18 mos	1 yr chg
Libor	7.56	7.25	0.82	6.06	-1.30
UK	5.63	0.06	5.68	5.61	-0.98
US	0.73	0.23	0.71	0.16	-0.54
Germany	3.55	0.44	3.82	0.62	5.70

### MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises	Price (p)	Chg (p)	% Chg	Falls	Price (p)	Chg (p)	% Chg
Celt Telecom	870.00	59.00	7.27	EMI Group	430.00	-48.75	-10.18
Misys	2142.50	130.00	6.46	Monument	74.50	-5.25	-6.58
St James Place	186.50	11.00	6.27	JBA Holdings	1107.5	-70	-6.34
Logica	1397.50	72.50	5.47	Rank Group	307.25	-17	-5.24

### CURRENCIES



Pound	of \$	Change	1 yr chg	Dollar	of £	Change	1 yr chg
Dollar	1.6691	+2.01c	1.6287	Sterling	0.5991	-0.73p	0.6140
D-Mark	2.9735	-0.72p	2.6598	D-Mark	1.7818	-2.47p	1.6298
Yen	210.38	+0.55	194.42	Yen	126.03	-11.20	119.13
Index	104.90	+0.10	95.80	Index	108.00	-4.90	101.30

### OTHER INDICATORS

of \$	Chg	1 yr chg	Index	Chg	1 yr chg	of \$	Chg	1 yr chg
Brent Oil (\$)	14.48	0.10	22.77	113.90	3.10	110.48	Feb	
Gold (\$)	297.95	7.20	352.00	RPI	160.00	3.80	154.44	Feb
Silver (\$)	5.83	0.25	4.73	Base Rates	7.25	6.00		

www.bloomberg.com source: Bloomberg

## Nycomed threatens legal action over CJD claims

Nycomed Amersham, the British healthcare giant, yesterday blasted the Hong Kong authorities and media for spreading panic after they accused it of exposing hospital patients to the threat of infection with Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD), the human form of mad cow disease.

Andrew Yates in London and Stephen Vines in Hong Kong report.

Nycomed is considering legal action over suggestions that one of its products had encouraged the spread of CJD. The problem arose after traces of possible contamination were found in the fluid given to more than 100 patients undergoing scans and gastric tests for heart and lung diseases. Seven of these people have since died.

Nycomed withdrew the

Pulmonate kits after it suspected that they could contain blood extracted from a CJD victim which was mixed in with other blood to form albumin.

This is a protein extracted from blood which is part of the liquid injected in patients to assist in tests for various heart and lung diseases. However it is still not known how exactly CJD is transmitted and there is no known case of transmission through blood.

A Nycomed spokesman said: "There is no evidence that CJD can be transmitted by blood. There is not the remotest possibility that these seven people could have died of CJD even if our products were riddled with it. This has caused damage to us and is quite without foundation. We are lining up the lawyers."

Nycomed's shares fell 25p to 237p yesterday after the story broke in Hong Kong overnight. It remains unclear how the contaminated blood came to be used in the kits but it is more than likely that the blood donor was unaware of the infection. The kits

were used in Hong Kong between July and December of last year. None of the patients have reported signs of illness.

The Hong Kong authorities did emphasise that the warning to patients who have used the kits was "purely a precautionary measure". The amount of CJD contamination was not proven, they said, and there was an extremely low chance of infection. Nevertheless they decided to go public "after balancing patients' rights to know and the possibility of causing undue anxiety to them".

Nycomed is highly critical of the decision. "We regret the public alarm in Hong Kong. It has probably caused a greater threat to public health than could ever be caused by our products and CJD," said the spokesman.

When CJD takes hold it causes fatal nervous disorders and more than 20 people in Britain have already died from this illness. However the incubation period for CJD is 10 years, and it can take up to 30 years to develop.

## EMI blames sales downturn on Far East financial turmoil

The financial meltdown in the Far East has taken its toll on CD and record sales from Bangkok to Peking, Andrew Yates finds that the fall in sales has put EMI, the British music giant whose stable of recording artists include the Spice Girls and the Beatles, in a spin.

According to EMI, music sales in the Far East have fallen by up to 10 per cent in the last few months as the economic turmoil has brought financial ruin to thousands and caused consumer spending to slump.

EMI warned yesterday that Asian trading troubles would knock £25m off profits for the year to March. Part of this hit comes from writing off the advances paid to local artists which the group will now struggle to recover.

Simon Duffy, EMI's finance director, said yesterday: "This has taken us and everybody else by surprise. The market in Asia is still declining at the moment. There are no obvious signs of recovery

and it could get worse." EMI has also been forced to merge some of its recording labels in the area which will bring local redundancies.

EMI's shares fell 48.75p to 430p as analysts rushed to cut forecasts on growing concerns about the long-term impact of the Far East crisis. Dresdner Kleinwort Benson has cut its pre-tax forecast for £332m to £305m for the year to March and to £315m from £342m for the following year. "EMI already warned of problems in the Far East last year but this is much worse than expected," said one industry analyst.

There was better news from EMI in the UK and America where it claims to have had a good year despite a slow down in sales across the industry. It had the number one Christmas album both sides of the Atlantic with The Verve top of the pops in the UK and country and western star Garth Brooks heading the chart in the US. EMI also dismissed suggestions that the Spice Girls had seen their best days. "They have had another outstanding year and reports that suggest their demise are unfair and misleading."

However, Mr Duffy ac-

knowledgeed that the growth in the worldwide music industry would slow over the next few years. This slowdown and the sharp fall in EMI's share price over the last few months has re-ignited rumours that the group could prove an attractive bid target. "The more EMI's share price falls the more it becomes a much more attractive bid target. As the market slows the big music groups must be having a closer look at cutting costs and joining forces."

EMI also confirmed yesterday it was close to securing the acquisition of Waterstone's book chain from WH Smith in a deal thought to be worth between £250m and £300m. The group plans to inject its HMV music shops and Dillons book chain into a new company with Waterstone's, which will eventually be floated on the Stock Exchange. EMI have teamed up with Tim Waterstone, the founder of the book selling empire, and Advent International, the US venture capitalists. Mr Duffy confirmed that EMI would take a minority stake in the new music and book retailer and receive a net cash sum for injecting HMV and Dillons.





**JEREMY  
WARNER**  
ON JAN LESCHLY'S  
EGO. WHY IT  
PAYS TO OWN  
'SLATE' MAGAZINE.  
AND THE CURSE  
OF ALASTAIR  
MORTON

## Is it logic or ego that drives the urge to merge?

There's not much that occurs in business which is genuinely new, and certainly the emergence of the truly global corporation isn't an especially modern phenomenon. Ever since the formation of the first oil multinationals in the pre-war years, there have been concerns about the power and influence of these gigantic corporations.

None the less, until quite recently the global mega-corporation has been confined to a relatively small number of industries - oil and automobiles being the obvious examples. Not so any longer. With globalisation has come pressure for consolidation to create a small number of dominant world players across a whole range of other businesses. Virtually no industry is immune to it.

The latest example is this week's disclosure of merger talks between SmithKline Beecham and American Home Products to create a new pharmaceuticals and health-care products giant on a par with the world's largest, Merck of the US. The industrial logic of these things is as a rule hard to fault; increased size brings competitive advantage across a battery of different costs. With size also comes greater marketing clout and, in the case of pharmaceuticals, enhanced research and development spending, which increases the company's chances of discovery.

All the same, it is not as much ego, management aggrandisement and empire building as industrial and commercial logic which is driving the urge to merge? In this particular case, that seems a real possi-

bility. Jan Leschly, chief executive of SmithKline Beecham, is a restless go-getter, filled with energy and ambition and he's intent on becoming the world's number one player in his field.

American Home Products undoubtedly has a succession problem which Mr Leschly could equally undoubtedly solve, but AHP is also a very different sort of company. The consistent earnings growth it has managed to deliver over the years is a result not of organic growth, as with most health-care companies, but of acquisition and a rigid, centralised attention to costs.

In the 1950s, AHP was the biggest company of its type in the world, but then a gentle process of erosion began to set in. Successive attempts at reversing it through acquisition have failed to correct the problem. With SmithKline Beecham, AHP sees the possibility of a fresh transfusion of high red corporate blood. The two purposes - AHP's need for new blood and Mr Leschly's ambition to be number one - seem to dovetail neatly but are these really the sort of motives to produce a world-beater. Mr Leschly is just as likely to end up with a case of transplant rejection as the athletic super-champion he wants.

One of those wonderfully obscure professional squabbles has broken out in the world of American academia over who deserves credit for a particular economic theory - in this instance the theory of "increasing re-

turns". The row carries more than usual significance since the idea of increasing returns, and the closely related concept of "network externalities", forms the theoretical basis of the US Justice Department's anti-trust case against Microsoft.

It was reported recently in the *New Yorker* magazine that the idea came originally from one Brian Arthur, a little-known Stanford economist. For years, the *New Yorker* claimed, Mr Arthur struggled to get his views heard; because the theory seemed to conflict with the mainstream US view that free markets are always self-correcting, he became a pariah, his views were obstinately opposed and he spent much of his career in the wilderness.

Baloney, says Paul Krugman, professor of economics at MIT, in the latest edition of *Slate*, a virtual magazine published over the internet. In fact the idea of increasing returns is as old as the hills, with a long academic history in which - surprise - Mr Krugman plays a part. According to Mr Krugman, it is nonsense to argue, as the *New Yorker* does, that Mr Arthur's work was so revolutionary that he was shut out of the academic establishment.

Of the two accounts, Mr Krugman's seems the more believable; the idea of increasing returns, like a lot of economics, is in the end just common sense. It is incredible that such a powerful concept was not in any way researched or explored before Mr Arthur stumbled across it. The theory adds up to simply this: goods become cheaper the

more of them you produce. Furthermore, some products, like fax machines or telephones, become more useful the more people who use them. Well there's a thing.

The reason the theory is important in the Bill Gates case is that Microsoft seems to be an example of how this process might allow companies operating at the forefront of technology to establish a monopoly to the detriment of the consumer and technological advance. The more people who use Microsoft's PC operating systems, the more everyone else has to. Microsoft has cleverly used this snowball effect to become the industry standard. You have to use Microsoft to be fully compatible with everyone else, even though there might be better and cheaper alternatives in prospect. The free market is not meant to operate in that way, but plainly it can do if left to its own devices.

But hold on a moment. Mr Krugman's complaint seems to go beyond that of plagiarism. The fact that the *New Yorker* has got it wrong about Mr Arthur's copyright, he suggests, rather undermines the whole article, which like a lot of what's written about Mr Gates these days, was broadly anti-Microsoft.

Indeed, the very theory of increasing returns is a contentious one. Mr Krugman argues. When Mr Arthur began peddling the concept "he seemed unaware of the conceptual difficulties that had led economists not to ignore but to downplay the idea". So there you are; the theory is disreputable anyway and as a result might be

doing real harm by discrediting good economics and promoting dubious policies.

All this must be music to the ears of Bill Gates, who is a big fan of *Slate*, which curiously for someone so computer-literate, he downloads on to paper before reading. But then this is hardly surprising, for Mr Gates owns *Slate* magazine. It costs him about \$10m a year to push out over the net. Cheap at the price, you might say.

I was intrigued to learn that John Prescott, the Transport Secretary, has hired Sir Alastair Morton, former co-chairman of Euro-tunnel, as a consultant to advise on how to get the Channel Tunnel high speed rail link built without digging even deeper into the public purse than the Government already is. Sir Alastair is certainly well qualified for the role; against all the odds, he got the Channel Tunnel built, and without costing the taxpayer a penny.

Regrettably, Sir Alastair's legendary talent for persuading the City and the international banking community to part with huge amounts of money for uneconomic endeavours could prove a handicap. Obviously he knows all the tricks. But by the same token it would be naive to think the City hasn't learned from the Eurotunnel experience. No banker, it is said only half in jest, will these days meet with Sir Alastair without checking his wallet afterwards. His association with the rail link could well prove the final coup de grace for this troubled project.

## Wiggins plan aims to launch international airport in Kent

Plans emerged yesterday for a new cut-price European air service, aimed at taking on airlines such as Easyjet and Debonair. Andrew Yates looks at an ambitious plan to transform a disused airbase in Kent into an international transport hub.

Wiggins, the property developer, is planning to create its new airline business at Manston airport near Margate. It has already embarked upon a £1bn redevelopment of the site which could bring more than 10,000 jobs to the area.

Manston is the RAF base where Barnes Wallace developed the famous bouncing bomb during the Second World War. However, it has hardly been used over the last 15 years and Wiggins bought the lease to the airport terminal and adjoining 40 acres of land last July. In the process it acquired the sole rights to fly civil-

ian aircraft into the airport. Now the Ministry of Defence has put the whole of the airport up for sale and it emerged yesterday that Wiggins is the frontrunner to buy the complex.

Oliver Iny, the chief executive of Wiggins, does not plan to stop there. "We want to create a network of European airports. We have already held serious talks with a number of people and hope to sign up six airports within the next six months," he said yesterday.

Wiggins is already in talks with several major tour operators, including Thomson, about establishing cheap flights to the Continent and hopes to attract freight operators to the airport. "The new breed of cheap airline groups have hardly scratched the surface of the potential market. We have partners with deep pockets," Mr Iny said.

Those partners include Siemens and Thomson-ASF, the German and French electronic giants, which will help finance, equip and run the airports.

Wiggins' big ambitions are not restricted to Europe. Mr

Iny has recently travelled to the US and is in talks with operators about acquiring regional airports over there.

Wiggins already owns 400 acres next to the airport complex, where it is constructing a huge business park. Cummins, the US diesel engineer, has already set up a new factory on the land and several more tenants are close to signing up. Wiggins is in the process of landscaping the new site by building new roads, two huge lakes and planting hundreds of chestnut trees.

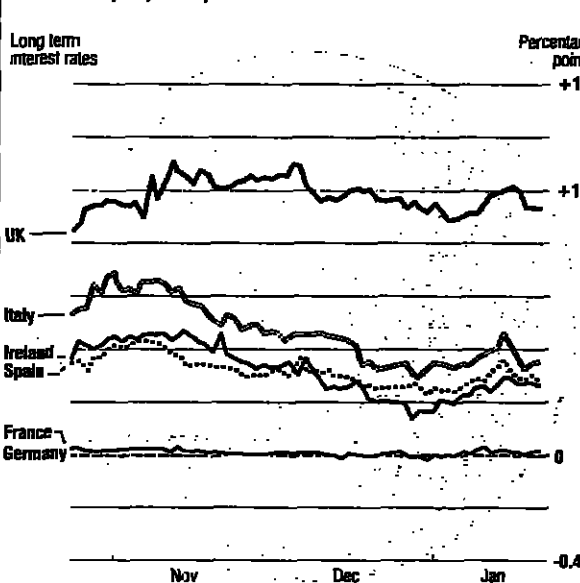
Separately, Wiggins said it was pursuing an £8m legal claim against Brent Council. It claims the north London borough has frustrated its attempt to build a leisure complex at the site of an old swimming pool at Kingsbury, near Wembley.

Wiggins has also submitted a planning application to create a large leisure complex in Liverpool.

Wiggins announced that pre-tax profits more than doubled to £1.1m in the six months to September. Its shares rose 0.25p to 12.5p.

### Who will be in EMU? The financial markets' view

The closer other countries get to the dashed baseline (Germany) the more likely they are to join EMU.



TOWARDS EMU: If the line moves towards the German base line it means investors no longer require such a high premium for holding that country's bonds compared to German ones, because they are confident the currency won't devalue against the mark. In other words, they think that country will be locked into a single currency with Germany in 10 years' time.

AWAY FROM EMU: However, if they think the country won't be in EMU, that it will have higher inflation, and that there is a risk of a future devaluation against the mark, then they will demand an extra premium for holding that country's bonds, so the line will move away from the base.

### When will EMU start? The City Analysts' View.

The independent asked analysts from: Nikko Europe, Paine Webber, ABN Amro, JP Morgan, Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, Salomon Brothers, Goldman Sachs, HSBC, James Capel, UBS

Probability EMU starts on time:	87%	(86% last week)
Probability EMU is delayed:	10%	(11% last week)
Probability EMU never happens:	3%	(3% last week)

## Experts back 87% chance of EMU on time

A week of "being nice to Italy" led economists to give firmer odds on a punctual monetary union. The *Independent's* panel of experts now believe there is an 87 per cent likelihood of European monetary union being launched on 1 January 1999.

Economists said a Monday meeting of EU finance ministers calmed worries about Italy's national debt. At 120 per cent of GDP, Italy's debt is double that required by the Maastricht criteria.

Ministers made favourable remarks about Italy's economy in an effort to repair any damage caused by negative remarks from the Netherlands. The Netherlands government had questioned Italy's ability to stay within the Maastricht rules.

Hans Tietmeyer, chairman of the Bundesbank, moved to quell speculation he was opposed to Italy's entry. Last weekend, in an interview with the German magazine *Focus*, he expressed doubts about the suitability of "high-debt" countries. He later said he had no specific country in mind.

Julian Jessop, economist at Nikko Europe, said the euro currency would be undermined if politicians ignored the evidence about Italy.

— Andrew Verity

## Lucas sells starter and alternator businesses

LucasVarity, the engineering group, has sold its heavy-duty starter and alternator manufacturing business, based in the UK, and its light-duty starter and alternator businesses in South Africa and Argentina to Prestolite Electric Inc for an initial £25.4m. Up to £11.4m will be payable on a contingent basis. Under the terms of the sale, PEI will acquire the assets of Lucas Heavy Duty Products, the share capital of Lucas South Africa and shares in Lucas Indiel, Argentina. In the year to January, sales of the three businesses totalled £80m and their pre-tax profit was £3m.

## Card Clear buys HTEC

Card Clear, the credit card payment and fraud prevention group, is to buy HTEC Group, a supplier of retail loyalty systems, for about £24.5m in a mixture of cash, shares and loan notes. The acquisition is being made by means of a reverse takeover. The company also announced that pre-tax profit in the 11 months to 30 November rose to £1.73m from £1.08m.

## Canadian banks merge

Royal Bank of Canada is buying Bank of Montreal for C\$17.69bn (£7.38bn), stunning a clubby banking community that has been shielded from the wave of mergers sweeping the world's financial industry. Combining Canada's first- and third-biggest banking companies would create a financial institution with assets of C\$453b, ranking it third in North America behind Citicorp and Chase Manhattan of the US.

## Airbus set for \$1.6bn order

Airbus Industrie is negotiating a \$1.6bn deal to supply United Airlines with up to 50 A320 narrow-bodied jets to replace ageing Boeing aircraft. The American carrier already has 45 Airbus jets in its fleet.

## Dalgety sale expected

Dalgety, the petfoods business, is expected to announce the sale of its food ingredients business for around £30m early next week. The front-runners to buy it are Kerry Group and Greencore.

## US West in cable talks

US West Media Group yesterday confirmed it was in talks to increase its stake in Telewest Communications, the UK cable company, although no offer has yet been made. US West International, the unit of US West Media that already owns 26.75 per cent of Telewest, wants buy the 10 per cent stakes held by Cox Communications and SBC Communications, industry sources said.

### COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Avalanche (t)	1.5m (5.45m)	-0.174m (0.11m)	-0.17p (0.01p)	nil (nil)
Card Clear (SP)	0.28m (5.75m)	1.72m (1.08m)	1.85p (1.23p)	
Wiggins Group (t)	0.83m (2.65m)	1.12m (0.505m)	0.16p (0.10p)	
WF Broadcast (t)	61.85m (56.01m)	3.64m (3.02m)	17.5p (14.3p)	4.70p (4.0p)

(t) - Total (p) - interim

## Molins chief executive resigns after troubled reign

Molins, the cigarette and packaging machine manufacturer, yesterday parted company with chief executive Peter Harrison after a tumultuous two-year period during which he presided over five profit warnings, revealed an accounting scandal at a US subsidiary, and watched Molins' shares lose two-thirds of their value.

However, Michael Orr, Molins' chairman, said the decision did not imply Mr Harrison was responsible for the company's recent troubles. "We wouldn't seek to lay the blame for any of the problems we've experienced at his door," he said. "They are more a question of collective

responsibility as well as external factors."

He said the resignation was down to "a difference in management style". Mr Harrison will continue to be available to the company on a consultancy basis for the next three months.

Mr Harrison, who was on a two-year contract earning £160,000 a year, will receive a payoff worth about £300,000. His share options are thought to be worthless.

Molins said Peter Grant, the finance director, will take on the chief executive's role "for the time being". However, he is also a candidate to fill the job permanently.

News of Mr Harrison's departure prompted Molins shares to fall 12.5p to 270p, a five-year low. Brokers said the fall was prompted by fears that his departure was a sign that more bad news was on the way. But Mr Orr said the resignation had nothing to do with trading conditions.

The process of finding a replacement for Mr Harrison has already begun, and a list of candidates has been drawn up. Analysts said a new face would reassure the City. "An outside appointment would be the best thing for Molins," one expert said. "But more than anything, they need an appointment sooner rather than later."

— Peter Thal Larsen

## GWR drops out of Melody Radio auction as sale price reaches £25m

GWR, the radio group, has pulled out of the bidding for Melody Radio after the auction for the "easy listening" station pushed its sale price up to £25m - at least £5m more than most analysts had expected it to fetch.

According to industry sources, GWR, which operates radio stations in the west of England and on the south coast, felt the price had got too high. The company is also believed to have pulled out because, in the case of a successful bid, it would have surpassed regulatory limits on the share of the audience any radio operator is allowed to control.

A spokesman for GWR declined to comment on the news, which came on the day that final bids for Melody Radio were submitted to Hanson, the building materials group which has put it up for sale. Although Hanson did not disclose the number of offers it had received, GWR's withdrawal is thought to leave three serious bidders in the race - Emap, Scottish Radio and Chrysalis.

The high price on offer for Melody will surprise the industry. Although the station has a large number of listeners, they fall into the older age ranges that are less attractive to advertisers.

— Peter Thal Larsen

## WHO'S SUING WHO

JOHN WILLCOCK



The Muppets are suing a London-based publishing company "for infringing the plaintiff's copyright in the artistic work 'Kermit'".

The Jim Henson Company, named after the late creator of the Muppet television characters, is seeking an injunction and damages from Avalanche Publishing of 483 Green Lanes, Palmers Green, London, together with James Clyne and Giordano Corrado, of 69 Duaraven Drive, The Ridgeway, Enfield, Middlesex.

Kermit is the figurehead to the whole Jim Henson group, a media business based in Melrose Avenue, Hollywood. The solicitors acting for the Henson group in London are Harbottle & Lewis.

The company's writ lodged in the High Court this week requests an injunction restraining the defendants from infringing the copyright on the lovable frog, and stopping them from "passing off or enabling, causing, assisting, procuring, licensing or authorising others to pass off any tobacco tins, posters or other products as being

licensed, authorised by or otherwise connected with the plaintiffs."

"Tobacco tins," eh? Whatever would Miss Piggy make of it?

Will Carling's old club NEC Harlequins is on the receiving end of a tackle this week from International Sports Group (ISG), a consultancy based at Mercury House, Knightsbridge, London.

ISG says that it "provided marketing advice and associated services" to Quins under an agreement dated 1 January 1997.

The consultants say in their writ that, under the agreement, Quins agreed to pay ISG a percentage of 15 per cent of the net revenue received from sponsorship arranged by ISG. ISG says they are also due 15 per cent of the cash value of any goods exchanged in return for sponsorship rights with Quins.

The club, based at The Stoop in Twickenham, terminated the agreement with ISG on 31 July 1997.

The writ goes on to claim commission

involving the London Broncos, the rugby league club which paid to play on Quins' ground last year. ISG says it is "unable to ascertain the amounts that are currently due to it from the defendant, without access to the Defendant's books and records".

The consultants are also claiming £5,287.50 for a report they prepared for Quins which they presented to the Club on 27 February 1997. ISG alleges that "despite repeated requests for payment of the sums due... the defendant has made no payment in respect of them".

ISG are being represented by Taylor Joynson Garrett.

Oh to be a commercial lawyer. The Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) went bust six and a half years ago, but the amount of work for m'learned friends produced by the liquidation of the bank just seems to roll on and on.

I was reminded of this by the transfer this week from the Queen's Bench to the Chancery Division in the High Courts of 31

legal claims, totalling £30m, brought by the liquidators against ex-employees of the bank.

The liquidators Deloitte & Touche, led by Chris Morris, want the former employees to repay staff loans which the latter took out while working at the bank, before it was closed down by regulators. The solicitors Wilde Sapte originally lodged the writs on behalf of the liquidators several years ago.

Representatives of the ex-BCCI employees brought their own action in the House of Lords late last year, claiming that they had been rendered unemployed by the "stigma" of their previous employment with the crashed bank, and therefore could not repay the monies demanded by the liquidators.

They won their claim of "stigma" in law, but have yet to win an action in court, or "in fact". And so the dispute rumbles on. This pales rather besides the liquidators' other outstanding legal claims for \$3.5bn (£2.1bn) against Price Waterhouse, BCCI's former auditors, and another

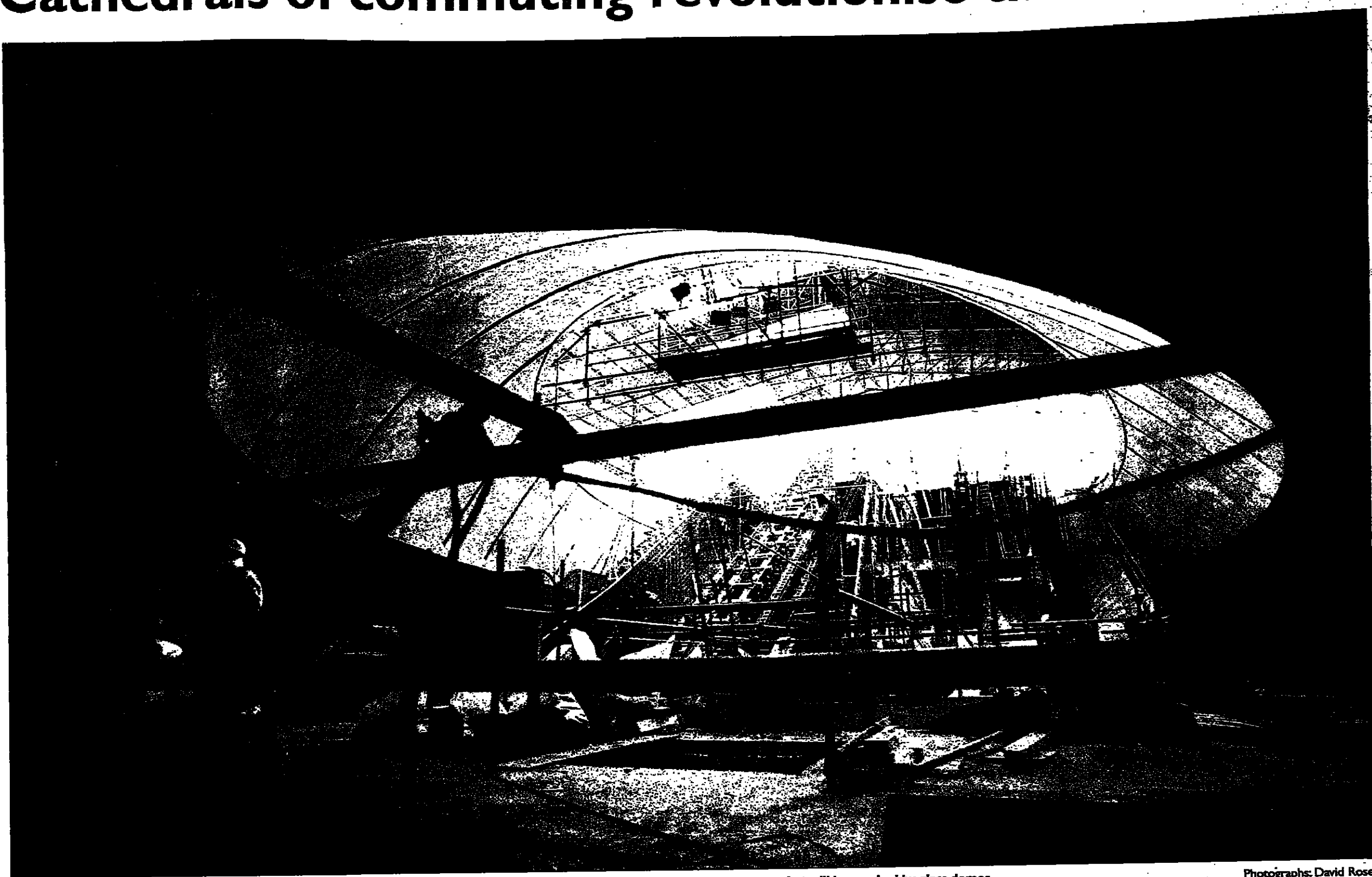
\$1.6bn against Ernst & Young, who were co-auditors until the mid 1980s.

Then there's the "Big One", as insiders call it: the liquidators' claim against the Bank of England for £600m on behalf of 10,000 UK depositors of BCCI. Mr Morris & Co claim that the Bank is liable as a co-regulator of the crashed enterprise, and intend to take their claim to the House of Lords.

Wilde Sapte and DIB Lupton Alsop are representing the liquidators against the ex-employees, while Lovell White Durrant is handling the big stuff against the accountants and the Bank.

Tim Bamford of Charles Russell rang me this week to say he is on the point of filing a full defence against allegations brought by the Ministry of Sound against his client Lynn Cosgrave, a former director of the south-east London rave warehouse. Ms Cosgrave recently left Jamie Palumbo's outfit to join a rival company. Stand by for more details of this dance floor dispute next week.

## Cathedrals of commuting revolutionise the old Tube



Foster's light: Part of Sir Norman Foster's £100m Canary Wharf station, another wonder-of-the-world-in-waiting, a 300m structure that will be reached by glass domes

Photographs: David Rose

**Superlatives abound as London's Jubilee line extension gets set for the big drive south to link Canary Wharf and the Dome with the West End**

Londoners have seen nothing like it. Vast, subterranean, airy cathedrals of commuting replace the draughty, crumbling labyrinth of tunnels and ticketing halls that stain the memory of the travelling public. This is the first glimpse of the 10-mile, £2.7bn Jubilee extension (JLE), due to open in autumn, which will squirt millions of passengers south and east of the present Underground network.

Europe's largest construction project, the line is a site for superlatives: the 116 escalators for the stations compare with a total of 243 on the entire existing Underground system. Westminster station, the crux of the project, will link the congested District and Circle lines and at 38m is the deepest building site in London. More astonishingly, Britain's tallest skyscraper - the 50-storey Canary Wharf Tower - is still some 50m short of the length of its JLE station.

The line's inspiration lies in the Far East. Its chief architect is Roland Paoletti, whose Hong Kong Metro revolutionised underground-station design. He and his architects, including the radical chic clique of Sir Norman Foster, William Alsop and Michael Hopkins and young guns such as Chris Wilkinson, will produce an underground landscape that will be unrivalled by any other metro system around the globe.

Conventional wisdom is that before the Second World War London enjoyed the best-designed, most closely integrated

and most efficient urban transport system in the world. The Underground of the Thirties was characterised by its scale and efficiency and also by the architecture of stations built along its extensions. Designed for the most part by Charles Holden, its apogee was Gants Hill. However, as Tube investment was shredded by subsequent governments, it looked as if the standards set by Holden would never be repeated. However, Mr Paoletti says he is not the inheritor of Holden's legacy. "Even with Holden, the thing was a labyrinth, an underground rabbit warren. Later on, it became an *ad hoc* thing. Those designers were like plumbers - you know, putting a tunnel here, a platform there. There was no invention."

The new architects, says Mr Paoletti, were given the barest of guidelines. "I knew these people were good. You do not need to tell them what you want." The only golden rule was to create stations which have a "logic to their layout... this means that travellers instinctively know where to find the platforms and the exits."

Passengers will see daylight filtering down to platform level - a design requirement. Each platform will be faced by sliding glass screens to prevent passengers falling under trains. These will open only when the train doors open. This also means the rush of air that whips through most Tube stations will be absent on the Jubilee extension.

It runs from Westminster south of the

Thames, through Southwark and Bermondsey before crossing under the Isle of Dogs at Canary Wharf to the Millennium site at North Greenwich before swinging north through east London to Stratford. North Greenwich, designed by Alsop, Lyall & Stormer, is at 400m long, the biggest underground station in Europe. Originally conceived as a park-and-ride scheme for drivers from Kent who wished to avoid the congested Blackwall tunnel, its exit now lies "15 yards from the Millennium Dome". There is room for more

current network. Sir Norman's £100m Canary Wharf station is another wonder-of-the-world-in-waiting. The 300m station, which will be reached by glass domes - whose panes are from a factory that supplies Ferrari with windscreens - will feature 20 escalators.

"By 2010 Canary Wharf will be the second-busiest station in London," said Dennis Drake, the station's senior engineer. "We will be looking at handling 35,000 people in the morning peak hour."

The first new stations since the Victoria line in the late Sixties will link parts of London previously isolated from the capital's transport system. "At West Ham at the moment there are probably in the peak four trains an hour. When the Jubilee line is fully operational there will be 36," said Kevin Otto, train manager for the JLE.

Tracts of London - especially in the south - have been untouched by underground trains because of the geology. Unlike north London, which is built on clay, the material underneath is mostly gravel and sand, which is difficult and costly to drill through.

It has already been noticed that the prospect of a Tube journey into the West End in 20 minutes has sent property prices spiralling in Greenwich, Canning Town and Bermondsey. The line has not been without its difficult moments. Many know it as the line designed to bale out Canary Wharf, the massive and controversial Docklands development built by Olympia

& York at ruinous cost and without transport infrastructure. Now the developers will pay a £400m contribution over 25 years towards the cost of building the Jubilee line, which the Reichmann brothers - who conceived the development - had promised. However, a deal was struck after the Major administration said it would move thousands of civil servants to offices in Canary Wharf.

In addition to costing £800m more than the original £1.9bn budget, the Jubilee extension will also open late - originally scheduled for a March 1998 start, the first of the 59 new trains will trundle along the tracks in September. And the signalling system - which would allow trains to run without drivers - is not working properly, so the line will only see 17 trains an hour running. And engineering problems mean Westminster station will open late - forcing travellers to change trains at Waterloo. Despite all this, the new line will change London as we know it. The promise of a trip into town in 10 minutes has seen firms flock to Canary Wharf. Citibank is moving into a 11-storey tower block with an entrance into the JLE station as part of the package.

A riverside leisure complex - featuring apartments, health club and a five-star hotel, is being built.

With stations linking Stratford, West Ham and Canning Town to the centre of town, it is not so much the East coming to London but capital going to the East.

BY RANDEEP RAMESH

lines to be added. "It can cope with 17,500 people an hour," said Mark Glanville, the station engineer. "But only about 12,000 people every 60 minutes will use it to begin with. You need the extra space because the designers could add another set of tracks going to Woolwich."

With blue glass illuminated by low-level lighting and a walkway suspended by steel bars, North Greenwich - likely to be renamed "Millennium", as it will service the Millennium Dome - is a far cry from the clutch of tunnels and platforms covered in psychedelic mosaics that litter the



Track record: North Greenwich (left), at 400m the biggest underground station in Europe, which will be able to cope with 17,500 passengers an hour, who will be whisked along by the latest rolling stock (right)







# TIME OFF

## TRAVEL, LEISURE & SPORT

Saturday 24 January 1998



Kiss of death: hippos are Africa's most feared creature and are responsible for more human fatalities than any other animal in the continent

Photograph: Gerard LaciFLPA

## And there let us wallow ...

**Mud, mud, glorious mud.** Sharon Eckman came face to face with a large hippopotamus in Botswana – and lived to tell the tale.

"Take your shoes off," whispered Lovebo. He looked extremely scared. And if your inebriated local guide is scared, you may be sure that you are seconds away from Certain Death.

Certain Death appeared in the form of an overlarge hippo which, against all the odds, ignored the other dug-out canoes and concentrated on ours, turning the sunset-bright beauty of the Okavango delta into a potential scene from *The Lost World*.

The delta nestles in north-western Botswana, a breathlessly still, serene maze of lagoons and waterways flanked by papyrus and dotted with waterlilies. The Okavango river bypasses the sea, and pours out over the Kalahari basin, creating a delta the size of Switzerland – the largest in the world.

Our small group (seven Brits, two Germans and a Canadian modelling himself on Tarzan) had little difficulty in adapting to life afloat as we lay back in the dugouts, or mokoros (two people plus poles) and shut our eyes

against the African sun. What with the soothing splash of our oars in the water, the soporific drone of nameless insects and the gentle rocking of the little canoe, it was not too hard to imagine ourselves on, say, the Norfolk Broads – until we rounded a corner to be confronted by an elephant directly in our path, grazing quietly on the plentiful vegetation. And then, of course, there were the hippos.

Sunset on the delta is a magical time, when the air still smells of the sun, and the noises off of roaming wildlife fill you with adrenaline. Reed frogs trill incessantly; distant elephants call imperiously to one another; countless birds chirp and coo.

Our little group had been joined by at least 15 other mokoros, much to our disgust. Logically, we knew that we were not the only humans in this timeless paradise, but until now we had had not a sighting of any other tourist. Still, all was tranquil as we raised our cameras to honour the night. Our equilibrium was only slightly dented by a hippo some distance away.

This harmony between man and nature was rudely shattered by the appearance of another hippo who took umbrage at the first hippo being in his territory. Hippo One, ousted, decided to vent its spleen on the hapless

mokoros – which shot off at an impressive speed. Ours, though, got stuck on a mudflat. By this time, in accordance with Lovebo's instructions, bewildered but not yet petrified, we had removed our shoes.

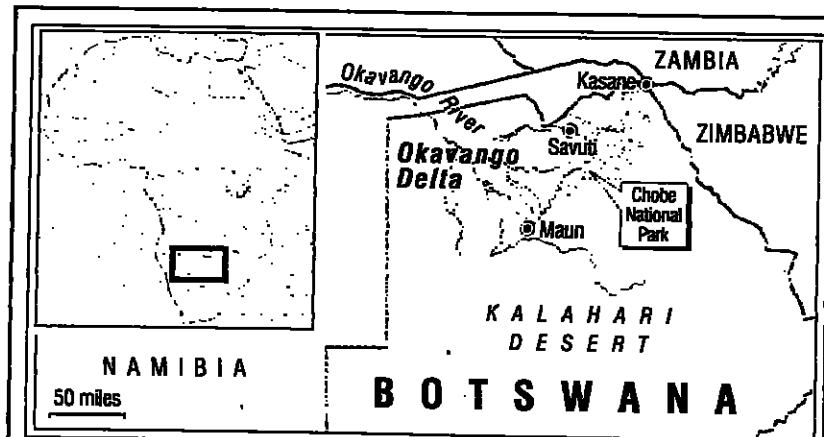
We turned our heads to see Mr Hippo not 20ft away, cleaving through the water and leaving a wash like the QE2. Lovebo yelled "Run!" and believe me, when you are told to run, you don't hang about, even when you know that the water you are leaping into contains a crocodile every 30 feet or so. Lovebo grabbed my hand and pulled me so hard that I fell in. In that split second I was aware of my arm being pulled out of its socket, my feet sticking firmly in the mud and the hippo – 10ft away now – opening its mouth wide. It was at this point that I also remembered hippos kill more people than any other African animal. Mortal terror is a great incentive. Another hefty tug from Lovebo, and we were standing drenched and shivering in the reeds, listening to the hippo snorting. Eventually it got bored and, typically, headed off in the direction we wanted to go. We emerged from the reeds to find that no one else had even got their toes wet: they were staring at us as though we were mad.

Back at the camp, humiliation abated.

After several drinks we were cheering up wonderfully. This was a safari on the cheap – which means basic, bush camping (you dispense with girly things such as washing and sit-down toilets). There's a kind of "let's stop here for the night" attitude which is wildly exhilarating, if occasionally unnerving.

Guides who knew exactly what they were about added immeasurably to the experience. Lovebo could spot game well before we did – and in the case of a green water snake, almost plucked it out of its home so I could get a better look.

Each day brought myriad delights. The first elephant was greeted by breathless gasps from all of us. We waited, spellbound, as it grazed knee-deep in the water, then, with an uninterested glance in our direction, lumbered off. There's a mixture of joy and awe when you are face to face with Africa's wildlife. And not just the Big Five, either. On one bush walk we tracked an impala, utterly graceful as it leapt away, ears constantly twitching for the sound of a predator. Learning how to read spoor – giraffe, passed here about two hours ago, young male – these are things that resonate in the mind long after you leave. And the hippos, of course.



### BOTSWANA BOUND

#### Getting there

If you book by next Wednesday and travel by the end of March, British Airways (0345 222111) charges £399 return from Heathrow to Gaborone, the Botswana capital, where you connect with a flight to Maun. Alternatively you can reach the Okavango Delta from Zimbabwe, travelling overland by bus through the Caprivi Strip of Namibia. Flights to Victoria Falls via Harare through Air

#### Zimbabwe (0171-491 0009) cost £614.

Sharon Eckman paid £90 for a five-day safari with a Namibian company called Wild Dog Safaris (19 Johann Albrecht Strasse, Windhoek), but as she joined a proving expedition the cost was considerably lower than it would normally be.

**More information**  
High Commission of the Republic of Botswana, 6 Stratford Place, London W1N 9AE (0171-499 0031).

INSIDE CITY BREAKS RAFTING SPORT RUGBY'S FAIRY FORTUNES FA CUP  
Bangkok/3 Highland fling/13 Elway's last hurrah/16 Scott Quinell at Richmond/19 The man in Shearer's sights/22

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**London Review OF BOOKS**  
ENGAGING THE MIND



# 2/EGYPT

## GREEN CHANNEL

Chinese New Year is on 28 January – when the year of the tiger begins. Ironically, though, Chinese tigers have dwindled to a point where they now number around 50 and are facing extinction. Those elsewhere in Asia are doing slightly better, but there is a real threat that the tiger could be extinct by the millennium.

According to Global Tiger Patrol there are now a maximum of 5,480 tigers left world-wide – down from more than 100,000 25 years ago. Siberian and Sumatran tigers are in their hundreds, Indochina has an estimated 1,050 and India heads the game with a maximum of 3,700. The Caspian, Javan and Balinese tigers are already extinct.

The threat of extinction world-wide is apparently fuelling "tiger tourism", says Chris Breen, of Wildlife Worldwide: "The fact that tigers are being killed is encouraging people to come to us so that they can travel and see the tiger before it disappears."

Simple arithmetic means the odds of spotting a tiger are poor, but the best places to visit include Bandhagarh, Corbett and Ranthambhor national parks in India, and Bardia and Chitwan national parks in Nepal.

With the recent success of the BBC's *Land of the Tiger* television series, tiger tourism is likely to increase. However, a spokesperson for Global Tiger Patrol says opinion is divided about how tiger tourism is managed, particularly "tiger shows" for tourists – where trackers find tigers and radio to a central point, then tourists are taken by elephant to see them. As if being harried by elephants and tourists were not enough, the tiger can then be easily found by poachers after the shows.

Sue Wheat

## RED CHANNEL

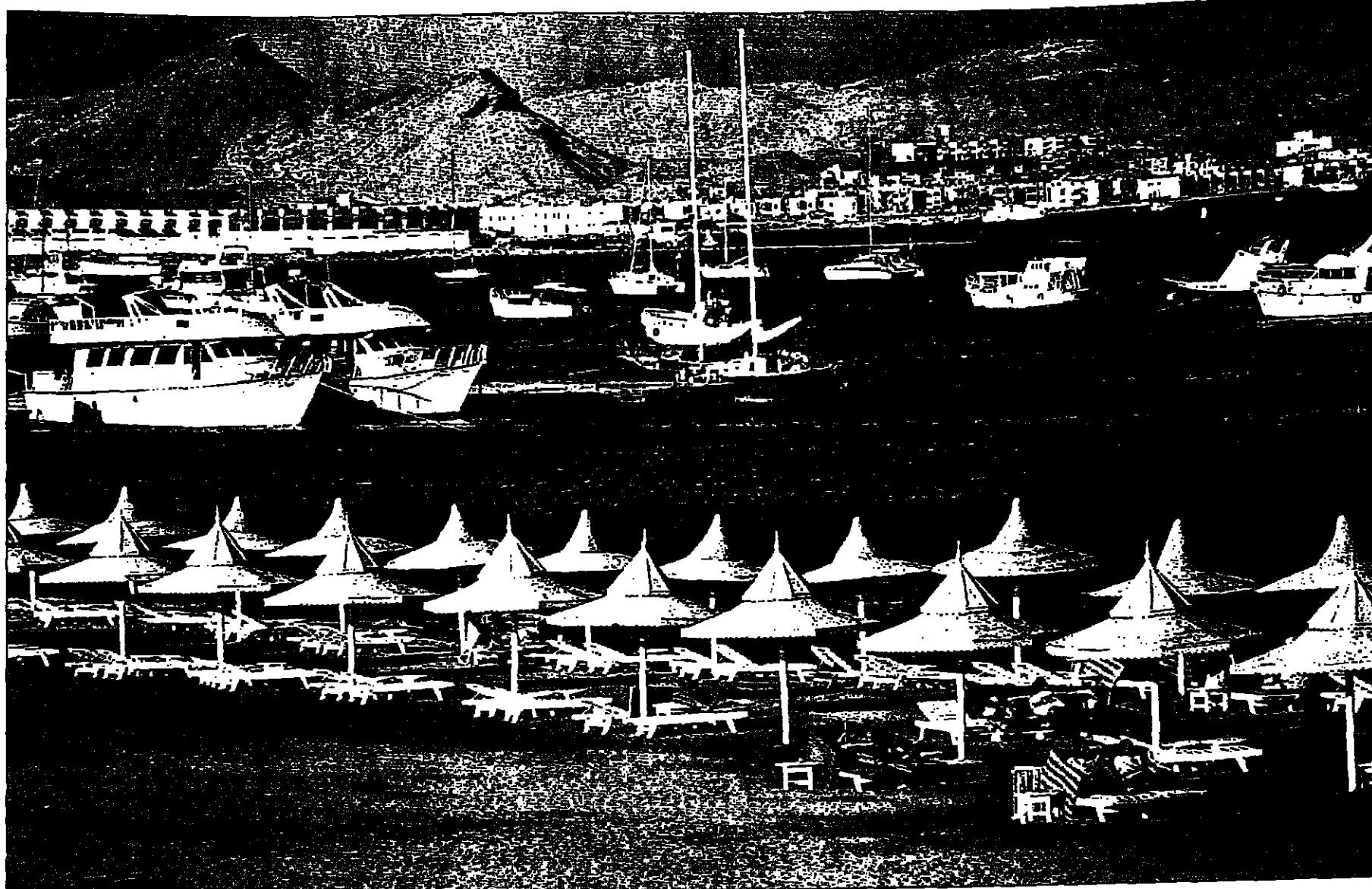
Recent warnings to travellers about drinking

"Due to the present economic situation in Thailand, THAI would like to announce that wine will no longer be served on board all domestic flights, in order to economise." – airport notice displayed by Thai Airways International

"Alcoholic beverages are prohibited on Florida beaches; public drinking is frowned upon. Any liquor, wine or beer container in a vehicle (RVs excepted) must be full, sealed and unopened – or in the boot." – *On the Road around Florida*, 2nd edition, (Thomas Cook, £12.95)

"We would like to remind all travellers that, in line with Civil Aviation Law, intoxicated passengers may not be allowed to board their flight. We therefore ask that all our passengers act responsibly when purchasing alcohol." – notice at Café Select, Heathrow Airport

"Salt Lake City now has a number of brewpubs, for which membership is not required; they're distinguishable from their counterparts in other states only by the requirement that they can't sell beer with an alcoholic content of greater than 3.2 per cent." – *Southwest USA: The Rough Guide* (£10.99)



Between the desert and the deep blue sea: the Egyptian resort of Hurghada was clearly aimed at out-Bendorming Bendorm – until the recent tragedy at Luxor. Photograph: Jean-Claude Aunos

## Hob-nobbing with the dolphin fraternity

Armed only with his enthusiasm, John McVicar set out to learn how to scuba-div. He had some surprises.

Hurghada: Buddy can you spare some air? I had always fancied going scuba-diving; probably the ambition derives from watching those early Bond movies where the action shifts effortlessly from the air, to the ground, to underwater. And I saw myself taking to it easily. I swim well, I am used to intensive exercise and I'm a risk-taker. But things didn't quite work out as I expected.

It began with a miserable yule-tide and the decision that what I needed was a sun, sea and sand holiday. So the New Year saw me browsing Text's holidays and flights pages. I quickly sniffed out the cheapest – Egypt. Of course, the tourist industry there is still recovering from the appalling incident last November when 58 tourists – including six Britons – were butchered in Luxor.

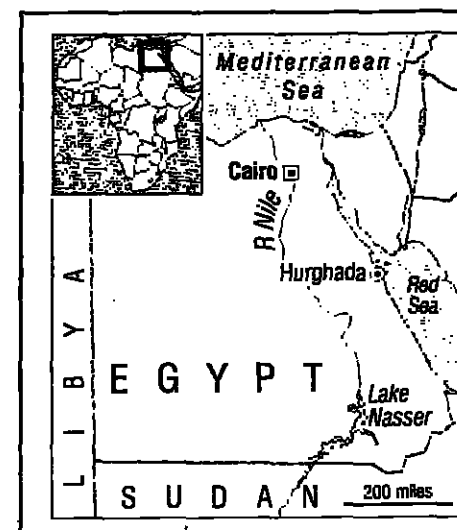
My best deal was a £109 package from Goldenjoy Holidays – including flight, three-star hotel and breakfast for seven days in Hurghada on the Red Sea where, as an unplanned bonus, I could also realise my ambition to go scuba-diving.

During the five-hour flight I daydreamed about diving with the dolphins, between blasting away on the hashish pipe and compiling a consumer's guide to the local brothels. The reality was very different.

Hurghada strings out along the shoreline of the north-eastern side of the Red Sea. The town looks like an abandoned construction site, which until the Luxor incident was clearly aimed at out-Bendorming Bendorm. Everywhere along its 30-kilometre length and 1-kilometre depth there are unfinished hotels, condominiums and holiday homes beginning to look like bleached skeletons in the desert. Behind it is a band of lowland desert backed by bleak sandstone mountains.

Hurghada airport doubles as a military base, and there are a lot of Kalashnikov-toting security guards around who smile at Europeans – but what they do to fundamentalist suspects would probably make Saddam Hussein blush.

Still, the sun shone for seven whole days; even in January the midday temperature is in the high



### EASY EGYPT

Crusader Travel (0181-744 0474) quotes £29 for a week's package departing next Friday. Goldenjoy Holidays (071-794 9767) is offering seven-night packages in Hurghada, including flights from Gatwick, transfers, breakfast and three-star accommodation for £289. Regal Holidays (01353 778096) has holidays for the same price, based at the Royal Hotel. British citizens require a visa, issued by the Visa Section of the Consulate-General at 2 Lowndes Street, London SW1X 9ET (071-235 9777). You need a passport and a photograph; since the Luxor attack, the £5 visa charge has been waived. Egyptian State Tourist Office: 170 Piccadilly, London W1V 9DD (071-493 5282).

seventies Fahrenheit, with only an occasional windy spell chilling me into jeans and a sweater. Soon after arriving, given that I couldn't find any brothels or dope dealers, I began sussing out the diving. There are 90 or so dive centres in Hurghada.

For 20 years the town with its exotic reef diving sites was the experienced divers' destination of choice. But in the past 10 years, as diving has become more popular, the centres have switched to recreational scuba. In fact, it was this change that established the beachhead for mass tourism, which is now the mainstay of the local economy. Probably up to a third of current tourists are either diving or doing a diving course. Generally the courses cost between £120 and £220 and last five days; it is these courses that are most profitable for the centres, so there is a lot of competition for the newbies. Normally my Scottish ancestry propels me to the cheapest offer going, but the thought of being 15 metres under the sea with gimcrack equipment made me question my usual priorities.

I rang a friend in London who knows his scuba, and he literally ordered me to Barakuda, which was top of the price range. The Barakuda is located in one of the oldest hotels in Hurghada, Giftun Village. But the untutored eye cannot see why it is better value

than its cheaper competitors. The owner, James, explained: "There are too many diving-schools in Hurghada. There is as yet no real inspection that takes out the cowboys, but of the 90 or so here I know that only about 10 are following the proper maintenance procedures."

I signed up with Barakuda and was initiated into diving by Jonas Mentz, 38, a wiry, spring-heeled, English-speaking Swede who is a kind of underwater hippie. "Planet Earth is really planet Oceania, as nearly 80 per cent of its surface is water. Life sprang from the oceans. As a diver you are privileged to go back to where we came from, and you should respect and honour that."

He quickly disabused me of any notions I had of breezing through the course. "Scuba is an equipment-intensive activity and to get the most out of your equipment you have to learn to use it as if it is an extension of your body. To dive safely you have to understand what pressure does to your body, and what measures you have to take to protect yourself from that pressure."

After a couple of days alternating between the classroom and the shallows, I was out in a boat among the coral reefs around Hurghada. The light here is a photographer's delight, and this is matched

by the translucence of the waters, which are rarely clouded by sediment or plankton.

Whenever I put on all the 60lb or so of gear I felt like Donald Duck playing Super Bowl, but once you are in the water and have mastered the buoyancy controls to achieve weightlessness, there is only the cumbersome nature of the equipment to contend with. Although January is the coldest month, the water temperature was about 68°F, and with a wet-suit on, it felt warm.

My first dive, which was to practise various safety measures, was only to six metres, but I was instantly absorbed into a world of fish and coral. Slipping into a mesmeric trance is quite common; Jonas quickly snapped me out of it, and the training began.

Over five dives in three days, I went through the card: controlling buoyancy to go up and down effortlessly, adjusting to pressure on the ears, communicating with sign language, taking off my equipment underwater and putting back on, doing safety drills, learning to navigate by compass and use an underwater computer... It was intensive and very tiring: I was sleeping nine or 10 hours rather than my normal six.

On my last dive, while we were on the bottom at Turtle Bay, Jonas etched "DIVER" in the sand, pointed at me and clapped his hands, then bowed.

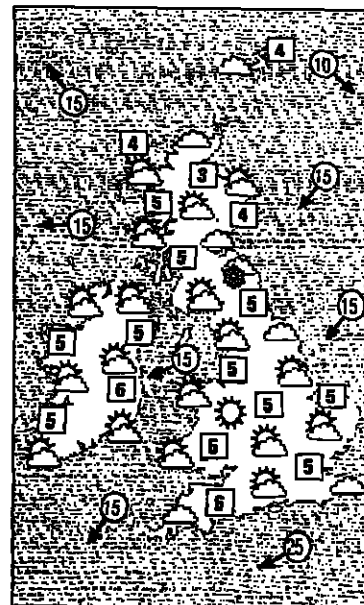
Yet I am not, nor will I ever be, a serious diver. My experience of scuba-diving was never unalloyed; every time I dived I had mixed emotions, doubts, reservations. People buy into the most diverse and bizarre packages to give spurious meaning and content to their lives.

Early on, while gliding among the parrot fish and looking for moray eels in the coral, I suddenly thought this was like *trainspotting* underwater. I mean, if you want to look at fish, then why not go to an aquarium or watch a video? And then there's all the paraphernalia and cost, just to stay underwater.

And yet, and yet, I remember Jonas stopping 12 metres down at Abu Hashish, tenderly to disentangle a hessian beanbag with "Produce of China" written on it, that had become snarled around a piece of coral. I remember hearing the squeak of dolphins and seeing the delight of Samir, the boat's captain, when he alerted us to a school of them as we sailed back. Alongside me, Jonas said sadly, "Dolphins like us, but they are naïve."

## WEATHER

### The British Isles, noon today



most recent available figure at noon local time. c: cloudy; l: light; h: heavy; m: mist; r: rain; s: snow; f: frost; th: thunder

Aberdeen	5	41	Cardiff	1	34	Inverness	5	41	Oxford	2	36
Agglessey	8	43	Carlisle	7	45	Ipswich	3	37	Plymouth	4	39
Ayr	8	43	Coleraine	7	45	Isles of Scilly	7	45	Scarborough	4	39
Belfast	8	43	Cork	7	45	Shrewsbury	6	32	Sheff	4	39
Birmingham	2	36	Derry	3	37	Southampton	3	37	Stirling	1	34
Blackpool	1	34	Edinburgh	7	45	London	4	39	Southend	4	39
Bournemouth	4	39	Exeter	7	45	Manchester	1	34	St Andrews	8	43
Brighton	4	39	Glasgow	8	43	Newcastle	1	34	Stornoway	5	41
Bristol	1	34	Guernsey	6	43	Nottingham	2	36	York	1	34

### Lighting-up times

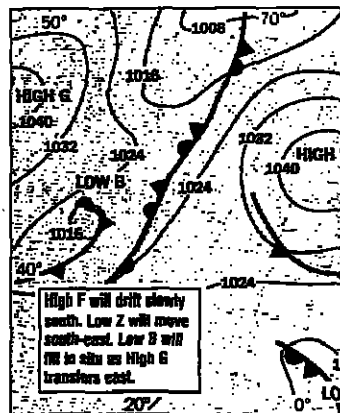
Today	Tomorrow
Belfast	16.46 to 8.25
Birmingham	16.38 to 8.00
Bristol	16.45 to 7.59
Glasgow	16.33 to 8.24
London	16.36 to 7.49
Manchester	16.36 to 8.05
Newcastle	16.27 to 8.09

### General summary and outlook

Spots of rain or drizzle are possible in southern counties of England first thing this morning but they will soon clear, and then most parts will have a dry day with spells of sunshine, the best of them in the west. Along eastern coasts of Scotland and England the cloud may thicken at times to limit the sunshine and give a light flurry of snow, but this will generally go unnoticed. A cold night will follow, with a sharp frost.

Most places will stay cold through the weekend and into Monday and Tuesday but any wintry flurries near eastern and north-eastern coasts are going to clear. That will leave everyone with spells of sunshine but there is going to be the increasing risk of freezing fog patches overnight, when, of course, it will be frosty. Rain will move into northern Scotland later on Monday and into Tuesday, with a few showers spreading down the eastern side of the country by mid-week.

### Atlantic chart, noon today



### World weather

most recent available figure at noon local time

Athens	13	55	Florence	8	46	New York	1	34
Auckland	1	24	Frankfurt	2	36	Nico	12	54
B. Aires	24	75	Geneva	1	34	Warsaw	18	64
Bangkok	32	80	Hamburg	1	34	Paris	1	34
Barcelona	8	48	Helsinki	1	34	Prague	2	28
Beirut	20	68	Hong Kong	14	57	Reykjavik	1	34
Belgrade	7	34	Istanbul	10	50	Rio de Jan	32	80
Berlin	8	32	Jerusalem	14	57	Riyadh	15	59
Bombay	27	81	Lebanon	22	72	Rome	11	52
Buenos Aires	13	55	London	4	39	Sydney	8	32
Budapest	8	43	Los Angeles	17	63	Taipei	23	73
Cairo	19	66	Madrid	5	41	Tokyo	5	41
Cape Town	22	72	Manila	15	59	Venice	9	48
Casablanca	18	64	Moscow	13	55	Vienna	8	32
Christchurch	21	70	Mumbai	28	82	Warsaw	8	32
Copenhagen	13	55	Montreal	18	63	Washington	4	39
Cork	7	45	Muscat	18	63	Wellington	2	36
Darwin	31	88	Nairobi	8	32	Zurich	1	34
Dhaka	18	64						

### High tides

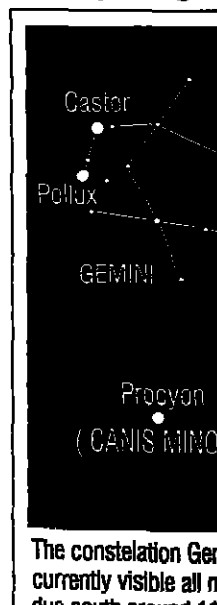
Location	AM	HT	PM	HT
London	16:12	5.6	22:45	6.0
Liverpool	7:54	7.6	20:22	7.7
Avonmouth	3:25	10.2	15:54	10.6
Hull (Albert Dock)	2:42	7.2	15:18	7.4
Glenrocks	5:42	2.8	21:39	2.8
Dun Laoghaire	8:32	3.5	21:01	3.5

### AA Roadwatch

London, A1 between Mill Hill Circus and Finsbury Circus. Roadworks and restrictions until May 31.  
London, A5211 Blackheath Underpass. Contrailow until April 15.  
Buckinghamshire, M40 J11-13 Roadworks and contrailow until 1999.  
Kent, M2 J5-7 Bridge maintenance & restrictions until March 9.  
Bristol, M5 J18-19. Major roadworks on Avonmouth Bridge until Jan 99.  
West Yorks, M1 J43-42 Stourton to Lofthouse (M62). A contrailow and 50mph speed limit are in place until July 13.  
Cornwall, A38 Bodmin Parkway Station turning. Contrailow until June 1.  
Somerset, M5 J22-23. Major roadworks & contrailow until March 31.  
Cambs, A1 Alconbury to Hadden. Construction work until December 31 1998.  
Suffolk, A12 between Kessingland and Wrentham. Restrictions until March 3.  
Derbyshire, A38 South Normanton. Major roadworks until March 1.  
Leicestershire, M1 J24. Northbound exit slip closed. Use J23a. Until April 13.  
Merseyside, A57 Knowlsey Roadworks at M57 junction. Until Dec 31.  
North Yorks, A1 Aberford to Garforth. Roadworks until August 1.

Get out and about with AA Roadwatch call 0333 401 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 30p per min (excl. VAT) 49p per min (incl. VAT) and 1p.

### The sky at night



### Sun and moon

Sun rises	7.50
Sun sets	16.56
Moon rises	4.04
Moon sets	13.16

### Air quality

Yesterday's readings	SO2	Outlook for today	SO2
London	Mod	Good	Good
S. England	Mod	Good	Good
Wales	Good	Good	Good
C. England	Mod	Good	Good
N. England	Good	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good	Good
N. Ireland	Good	Good	Good

Jacqueline Milton



# 3/CITY BREAKS

THE INDEPENDENT  
SATURDAY 24 JANUARY 1998  
■ 3

## 48 hours in the life of Bangkok

You need a break – and a short-cut to the soul of a city. Each week, *The Independent* provides a prescription for the perfect weekend break. This week, Simon Calder spends a 48-hour stopover in the Thai capital.

**Why go now?**  
Pragmatically, because January finds steamy Bangkok at its coolest (though this is a relative term). Financially, because meltdown in the Far East means prices have been halved in the last six months. Spiritually, because serenity can still be found within a frenetic city of six million.

**Beam down**  
The cheapest non-stop flights that I could find are on Eva Air for £469 return from Heathrow, booked through World Plus (0181-771 0218). If you are prepared to change planes in Prague, then Flight-Bookers (0171-757 2444) has a fare of £340 from London or Manchester on Czech Airlines.

Bangkok is, of course, a popular stopover on trips to Australia: Quest Worldwide (0181-547 3322) has a fare of Alitalia via Rome of £624 return to Melbourne. If you book by next Saturday.

**Get your bearings**  
The runway at Don Muang airport has been there since 1912, making it the oldest airfield in the world that still has the same location. Thankfully the terminal buildings have been enhanced over the years, and new arrivals are given some protection from the tourists that used to converge.

Unless you arrive during the morning rush-hour, the easiest way into town is probably a metered taxi, a relatively new invention. Including tolls on the expressway, you will pay around 300 baht for the ride – which, at yesterday's rate of exchange, is about £2.50. In rush-hour, you'd be better off following the signs to the train.

**Watch out for ...**  
Food and drink offered by strangers, as it may be drugged, according to this month's travel advice from the Foreign Office. It continues: "The standard of driving is poor and there have been several fatal bus crashes on Thailand's roads in the past few months."

**Check in**  
The parsimonious will head straight for Khao San Road, the 500-metre long Westerners' street just east of the Democracy Monument. As well as travel agencies and shops selling counterfeit fashions, you can find backpackers' bunks for as little as £1. But on a short stay, you owe it to yourself and the people of Thailand to splash out a bit. My favourite is the faded chic of the Royal Hotel (00 66 2 222 9111), just south of Khao San Road, where a perfectly comfortable double room with television costs £15 a night.

For luxury, it is hard to beat the Oriental (00 66 2 236 0400), overlooking the river south of the railway station, which this week is offering rooms with views for £150 a night.

**Take a ride**  
Whether or not you reside at the Oriental, liberate yourself from Bangkok's choking streets and board a riverbus. These gallant vessels zip up, down and across the Chao Praya river, yielding views that make sense of a city that often feels overwhelming. Go ashore at Thewet, on the east bank in the north of the city. Less favourable forms of transport include the tuk-tuk (to imagine these screechy three-wheelers, cross a Reliant Robin with a bus shelter) and the back seat of a taxi-bike, usually a decrepit Honda 100.

**Take a hike**  
From the boat station, go east to the relative calm of the Ambara Garden. But he warned that "Bangkok" and "nice walk" do not sit easily in the same sentence.

**Lunch on the run**  
The present parlous economic state means you can get a fine, instant bowl of noodles and vegetables from one of the capital's zillion roadside food vendors for as little as 10 pence. Eat plenty and often; you deserve it, and so do they.

**Cultural afternoon**  
The Grand Palace is a mandatory call for every visitor, a fabulous concoction of architecture so intense that it looks like a Hollywood film set. Note that it closes for the day early (3.30pm), and dress – as you should everywhere in Bangkok – with decorum.

**Window shopping**  
Bangkok is the bargain basement of the world at present, and you can barely walk along a street without encountering a retail frenzy. For dramatic sights and smells, explore the lanes around Chinatown (mainly south of Charoen Krung Road, stretching down to the river). For the keenest clothing prices, try Pratunam Market (east of the city centre) – though most Westerners end up paying a bit over the odds and picking everything up in the relative calm of Khao San Road.

**An aperitif**  
Pratunam Market also tees you up neatly for the ideal sunset view – from the Sky Lounge at the top of Baiyoke Tower (00 66 2 252 3890). The whole outrageous sprawl transforms itself as you sip your Singha beer, a bargain at £1.40.

**Demure dinner**  
You could stay put at the top of the tower, but an even more alluring place to dine is the Oriental Hotel – and you can choose from seven restaurants, from Thai to Italian. Make do with local beer rather than imported wine, and the final bill will be approximately halved.

**Sunday morning: go to church**  
Among Bangkok's hundreds of temples, one wat stands out: Wat Po, which commands a vast block south of the Grand Palace. You may well spend most of the day at the city's biggest and oldest temple, drifting around grounds adorned with exquisite sculptures, and admiring the 46-metre reclining Buddha. But the main draw is a massage at the Thai Traditional Medical School in the temple grounds. For £2 or so, you can undergo an hour's comprehensive pounding. Don't underestimate the pain this involves, but there is no better cure for jet lag and other aviation ailments. You'll be in fine fettle for your onward flight.

**The icing on the cake**  
If you have never been in a first-class lounge at any airport, Bangkok is the place to try it. Holders of even the dodgiest economy ticket can buy their way in. Just through passport control in Terminal 1, you'll see the Louis Tavern – a sumptuous subterranean bolt-hole where graceful staff bring a constant flow of chilled drinks to your deep leather armchair. Two hours of this treatment is much more comfortable than the Wat Po massage – and a darn sight cheaper, at 600 baht (about £7). A cut-price alternative is the Food Centre, in the passageway between International and Domestic terminals. With two dozen stalls preparing fresh dishes to order, this is possibly the finest, and certainly the cheapest, airport catering establishment in the world.



Spice of life: chillies on sale in a streetside market by the Chao Praya river

Photograph: Robert Francis/Robert Harding Picture Library

**What's wrong with Scotland?** More precisely, what's wrong with Scotland's three leading airports?

The communities they serve must be miffed about the way millions are poured into new rail links for English airports, while the Scots continue to make do with slow, congested roads.

This week, the Heathrow FastTrain started running between central London and Britain's busiest airport. Today and tomorrow you can travel on the new link for free.

After that, it will become the most expensive railway in the UK – both from the point of view of the passenger (from June, at least £10 each way for the 15-mile journey, with no reductions for kids), and the airport's owner BAA, which has paid close on half-a-billion pounds for the new line. Well worth the investment, though, as all BAA's airports are now connected to the rail network. As long as they're in England.

BAA has ensured that Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted

and Southampton have excellent links by train. Yet the company's three Scottish airports remain marooned from the rail network. In the case of Edinburgh and Aberdeen, main-line railways run right past the airports; a link from each would cost a fraction of the £440m BAA spent on its Heathrow extravaganza.

Glasgow is Scotland's leading airport, and the fourth busiest in the UK, yet plans for a rail link to the main line a mile and a half away were shelved when local government in Strathclyde was last reorganised.

A spokesman for BAA in Scotland says the reasons are two-fold – the airports are closer to the cities they serve than those in England, and that only 12 million people in total use the company's three airports in Scotland, compared with close to 60 million for Heathrow alone. In short, he says, rail links are unsustainable.

The effect: south of the Border you can take the train to the plane; north of it, you have to queue for a bus.



SIMON CALDER

Anglo-centric or not, tribute should be paid to the strides BAA has made in reducing road travel to

Heathrow. Staff have been offered cash to relinquish car park passes, and awarded a 15p a mile bicycle allowance.

The latest move in the "Freeflow Heathrow" campaign is a pilot scheme to provide free transport (not just for pilots – for anyone who works at the airport). People with a Slough postcode and an airport ID qualify for a travel card covering much of south east England, gratis. (It would be a dreadful slur to say that at last there is some compensation for living in Slough.)

The man behind the scheme is Heathrow's managing director, Roger Cato, who says, "We are

absolutely committed to improving public transport access to the airport. BAA's vision is to have 50 per cent of customers travelling to and from Heathrow by public transport." Mr Cato cannot be accused of introducing the free travel scheme from self-interest – he lives miles away from Slough, at leafy Horsham in West Sussex.

His 35-mile journey to the airport is a tricky one. Does he take the train to London Victoria and the Airbus from there, or change at Clapham Junction and go to Feltham for the connecting bus? No, he travels by car, though a BAA spokeswoman says that he carshares when possible.

Since I seem to specialise in being in the wrong place at not quite the right time, I was surprised to find myself booked on a flight back from Bangkok to Heathrow that arrived on Monday, the day the new FastTrain link began. Unfortunately, the rail tunnel from the airport won't be completed until June. Until then, you have to catch a bus to "Heathrow Junction", basically a large shed on a trading estate five miles north of the airport.

The bus I took from Terminal 4 spent the first five minutes heading directly away from London, down the A30 towards Land's End. But the overall journey to

Paddington took the promised 35 minutes.

The new line also provides a handy poser for dealing with departure lounge bores: If ABZ is Aberdeen and BHX is Birmingham, where is QQP? Answer: Paddington Station, London W2, now awarded an international aviation call-sign.

One more line: next weekend, *The Independent* Online edition acquires a special travel section, combining the best from these pages, our Wednesday travel page in *City Plus*, and our sister paper, the *Independent on Sunday*. This worldwide window can be found at [www.independent.co.uk/travel](http://www.independent.co.uk/travel)

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# 5/SKIING

THE INDEPENDENT  
SATURDAY 24 JANUARY 1998  
5

## Ski heaven for beginners

It's safe, secluded and a great place to take children. Jane Slade goes skiing in the Vosges.

It seems extraordinary that there is a ski area in France just six hours' drive from Calais that hardly any Britons have heard of. The Ballons des Vosges look like the tree-lined contours of the Rocky Mountains in America rather than the jagged spires of the French Alps, which is probably why they attract so many Continental families and beginners.

The atmosphere here is intimate rather than hip. You are more likely to see babes on planks than grunge kids on snowboards, and you'll hear the sound of a woodcutter rather than a chainsaw. You also need never fear the sound of exploding dynamite. This avalanche-free ski zone is a secluded place to begin testing yourself or your child on skis.

There are other benefits, too: this is a beautiful area of frozen lakes and lush green forests, where cosy mountain restaurants serve piping hot quiche lorraine to wash down with a glass of good wine.

If you take the road to Reims and drop south between Nancy and Strasbourg, little signs to ski resorts pop up at the most unlikely moments. The biggest ski area is La Bresse, which by Alpine standards is small - 36 pistes, covering 220 hectares. It is also comparatively low, rising to just 1,350 metres. But the owner of the lift company there, Jean-Marie Rémy, has invested heavily, and 70 per cent of the runs are covered by snow-making machines.

Jean-Marie opened the first ski lift at La Bresse 30 years ago, when the word "ecology" was barely understood by the skiing world. Now he is in constant struggle with conservationists as he tries to extend the area.

Fortunately, there are masses of badly needed snow-cannons, fed by a conveniently located lake, and a ski school geared up to the needs of children and adult ski and snowboard débutantes.

Rémy learned the art of survival when he was abandoned in the Vosges forest after the Germans took his father and older brothers off to labour camps. He now gives local children free lift passes, and provides ski fanatics with floodlit skiing until 10.30pm during high season.

For more experienced skiers, the Vosges makes an ideal



In Vosges - with a skyline free of pylons

break on the way to the Alps. It may also remind you of the early days of unsophisticated skiing, a few runs where you can't get lost, and a skyline free of pylons. Above all, it is a beginner's paradise.

The region's second largest resort of Gérardmer rises above a glorious lake, which during winter is an ice rink and skate-surfing playground. Rather smaller (20 pistes, covering 40 kilometres of trails) and with fewer snow-cannons, Gérardmer is also good for families. It has a kindergarten, a children's ski school and a snowboarders' half-pipe. The village atmosphere is friendly and the non-English-speaking instructors have turned word-free communication into an art form.

The even tiner resort of Lispach has just six runs (two green, two blue, one red and one black) but lies in the heart of northern France's largest cross-country skiing domain, giving access to the trails of its larger neighbours Gérardmer, Nonrupt-Longemer and La Bresse. More than 100 kilo-

metres of cross-country trails meander through forests, round lakes, and over hills from 800 metres to 1,200 metres high.

But for the ultimate in safe, secluded skiing, you cannot beat the Ermitage Frère Joseph at Ventron, which offers guests their own private ski area. Thibault Leduc's grandfather built the first ski lift here in the Sixties, but left it to Thibault to develop the accommodation. Two medium-priced hotels, offering some of the best food in the region, stand at the foot of the lift.

Mountain facilities are limited but popular touches include places for picnic lunches in the

woods, and tree houses for the children. Snowboarders are banned in high season. The only downside to this idyllic spot is that it is very low (barely 1,000 metres) and there are no snow-cannons. So call for a snow report before you drop in.

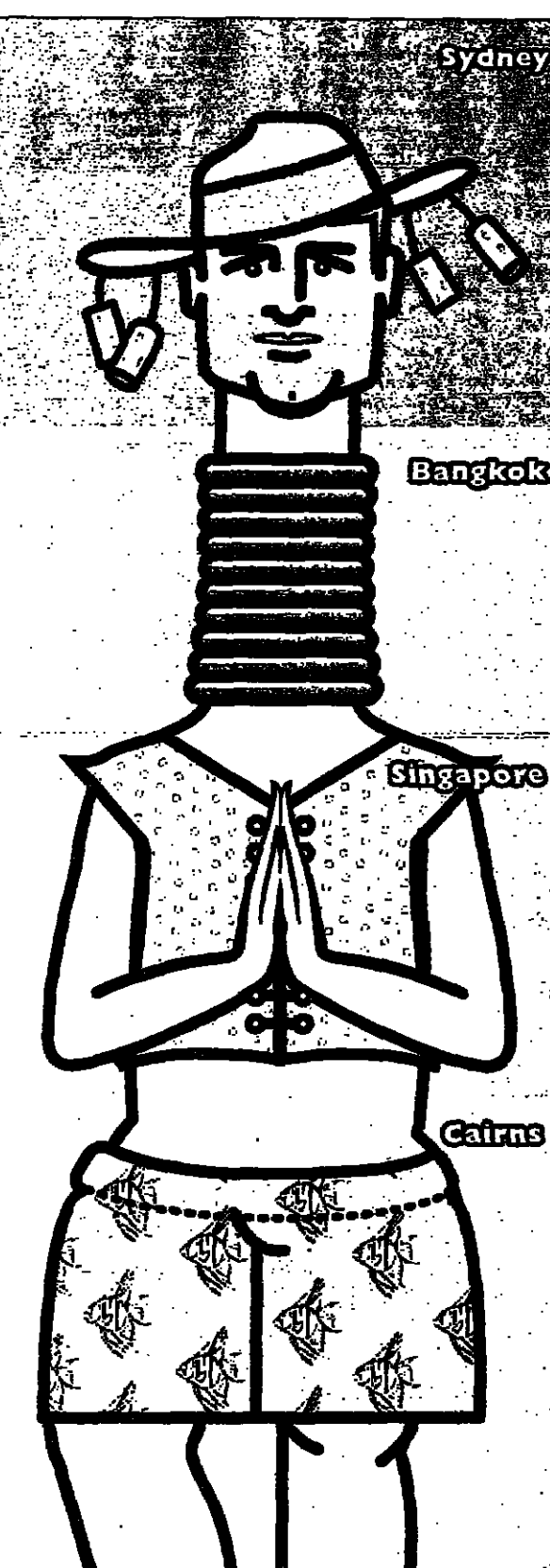
Jane Slade paid £140 to travel by Sena Line from Dover to Calais, and £40 return in tolls on the French autoroute. She paid £40 a night (excluding breakfast) at the two-star Ermitage Frère Joseph hotel in Ventron. For hotel booking and snow reports contact Gerardmer Tourist Office 00 33 329 272727, La Bresse Tourist Office 00 33 329 254129.

### HIGH ROAD

The first Thomas Cook Overseas Timetable of the year (price £8.40) brings news of a new, upmarket train service in Australia: "The new Great South Pacific Express, which should turn out (when it starts next August) to be one of the world's best ultra-luxury cruise trains. Bookings between Brisbane and Kuranda, and between Brisbane and Sydney, can already be made on this train, which will be an exact replica of an 1890s service. It is not yet known whether you will have to 'dress up' before being allowed on board."

### LOW ROAD

The same publication has less favourable tidings from other parts of the world. "The Indonesian railway operator has never published timetables in any comprehensible form. If a train is fully booked, they have no worries about adding a car with no vestibule door, or 19 windows missing. Not that they have reached the level of a vehicle seen recently, travelling at fairly high speed, too, in Algeria - which was simply a body shell on wheels, with no doors, seats, or lights ..."

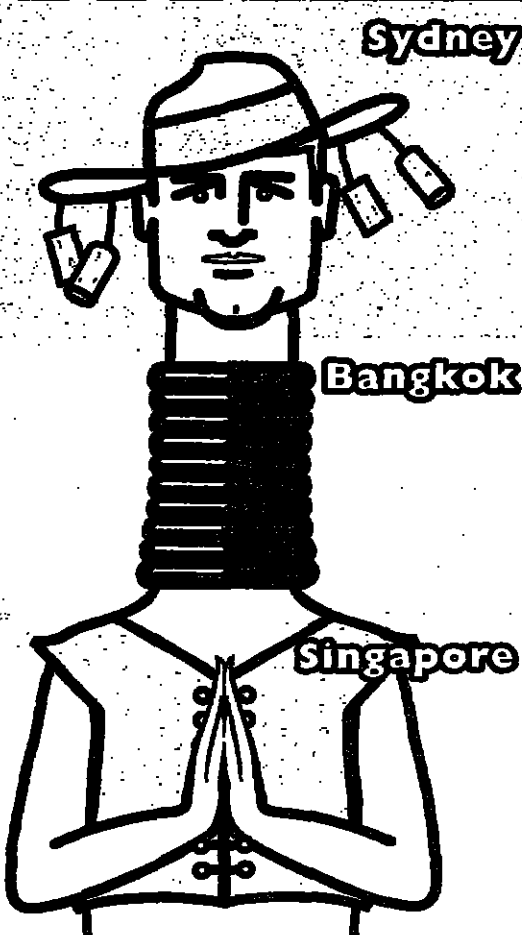


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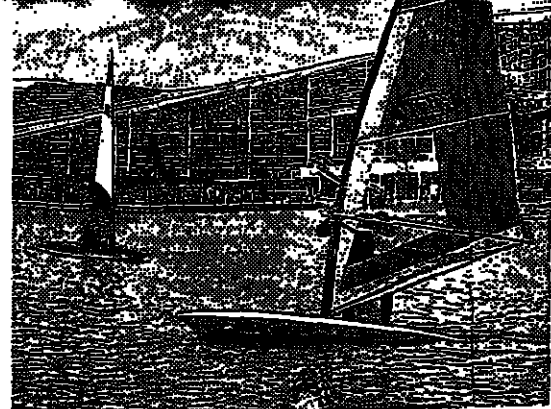
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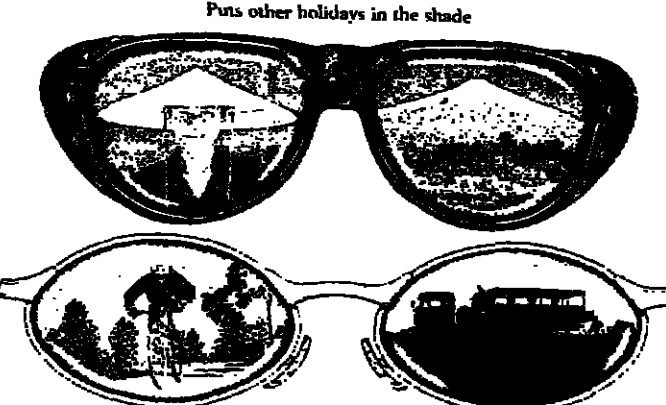


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# Pushing the boat out with minarets and chips

**Juliet:** I wanted to walk straight down to the pier, but Sarah wanted to keep all the shops. I did like a lot of the shops especially the one which had rolls of black-and-white spotted material in the window that looked like a Dalmatian dog hair. I liked the beach and the tiny little puppet shop on the seaford which had string puppets hanging in the window. I thought the pier was very exciting. I liked sitting in a canoe that floated round a little river through a tepee and past a giant cactus, and I liked the bumper boats. Sea Life was fun. I liked touching things in the rock pool. The sea-anemones were really sticky, and the hermit crabs were all bumpy. I thought the ray fish were very friendly because they kept sticking their noses out of the water to say hello. I had a really good day out in Brighton and I enjoyed going home on the train.

wooden-slatted deck. Here the air smells refreshing and the water sparkled as we promenade up and down just as the Victorians would have done. Feeling hungry, we fortified ourselves with fish and chips and then walked past the amusement arcade to the children's funfair on the end of the pier where we sampled the genteel delights of the bumper boats, the mini-dodgems and the leaping horses on the golden carousel.

Back down the pier and across the road, another Victorian building has been renovated. The old Brighton Aquarium, built in 1872, houses the Sea Life Centre and

some of the original Victorian tanks have been restored. Here little pop-eyed plaice and great gulping catfish swim about. In the modern tanks, tiny seahorses and huge gliding rays are equally enchanting, but I most enjoyed gawping at the white-bellied sharks in the underwater tunnel.

After tea in the Lanes we wandered back towards the station past George IV's fantasy palace, the Royal Pavilion. Outlined against the afternoon sun, the onion-shaped domes and flying minarets looked bizarrely exotic; an uplifting end to a refreshing day out.

**Affie:** I thought it was a bit boring walking down to the sea as all the shops we looked in were selling things for grown-ups like tables and chairs and pots and jewellery. But I did like the juggling shop. It had juggling balls and kites and skates in the window, and I thought it would be a really good place to buy a present.

The beach was quite exciting. It was nice and cool, as I felt hot after walking through the town, and I liked the sound of the pebbles crunching under my boots. I liked looking for treasure, and found a ball of fish eggs which I took home.

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# 10/GARDENING

## Grow your own satisfaction

Who needs flowers when you could have great swirling leaves of cabbage instead? Anna Pavord digs for victory in the vegetable garden.

It being the time of year when hope springs eternal, I have been swamped by intricate details of the new diets that friends have embarked on. Fat-free, sugar-free, dairy-product-free, additive free, genetically modified-free, red-meat-free. I've nodded my way through accounts of most possible permutations, sustaining myself the while with my current passion - dark-chocolate-covered ginger biscuits. The one great plus of all this denial is that although friends will still drop in for coffee (de-caf, no milk, no sugar) there are many more biscuits for ME.

There's never been more fuss about the food we put into our mouths, whether the fiddling is self-induced, or imposed by an extraordinarily jittery government, yet more cases of food poisoning are reported than ever before. And running parallel with these misgivings about food is a positively epicurean embracing of it. Food is theatre. Food is television. Chefs are film stars, restaurants are performances. Food gobs up more print each weekend than is ever devoted to art or music.

One thing about the foodfests puzzles me. Given that we all worry (rightly) about what may or may not have been sprayed on the fruit and vegetables we buy, given that we all know that no amount of slaving over a hot stove is going to turn cotton-wool tomatoes into a gourmet's dream, why don't more of us grow at least some of our own food?

The advantages - taste, peace of mind - are obvious. There are also more subtle benefits: self-sufficiency and the knowledge that at least a few bits of what you eat have not been driven hundreds of gas-guzzling miles before they hit your plate. I'm more interested in the perceived disadvantages, though. I am not trying to sell gardening here. I'm taking for granted the fact that anyone reading this is likely to be interested in growing something. But why do so many people grow flowers, while so few grow fruit and vegetables?

Lack of space. That's a good way to shut me up when I'm in crusading mode. But is it true? Anyone who gardens at all must have at least a windowsill or a window box or a balcony, even if they don't have a patch of proper ground-level earth. Basil grows better on a windowsill than anywhere else you can put it. Frilly lettuce thrives in window boxes. Tomatoes flourish on balconies, provided they get some sun. Cord apple trees will live for years in pots, provided they are fed and watered. If so many millions can commit to their cats, why does commitment to an apple tree seem such a terrifying proposition?

And then there are allotments. They were set up precisely to cater for those who had no gardens of their own and their demise is one of the saddest indications of our present priorities. Sites that were once on the fringes of towns and cities are now prime development targets. Plot holders at the Hazel Grove allotments in Stockport have long been fighting a rearguard action against Tesco, which wants to turf them off their patches to build a superstore. There's an irony.

Lack of time. I'm not sure about that response either. If you like to potter round among plants anyway, pottering around a courgette plant is not going to absorb any more of your valuable free moments than sustaining a sunflower. If time were really a factor in the way we garden, none of us would have lawns. They are more time-consuming and less rewarding than anything else in the garden.

Lack of experience. But that's no bar to gaining experience. Gardening, like playing football, is one of those things that you have to do to get the knack of it. Things happen that you don't understand, so then you turn to friends or books

to find out where you are going wrong. *The New Kitchen Garden* (Dorling Kindersley, £16.99) was written (by me, so this is a shameful piece of self-publicity) entirely with new gardeners in mind. If you can grow roses, you should be able to get your head round radish.

Lack of interest. This is the insoluble one. But it's a free world (just) and gardening is an important expression of that freedom. I'd certainly fight to the death any law that said people had to grow vegetables and fruit. I'm just surprised that more don't want to. I am happier tinkering with our fruit and veg than with anything else in our garden (except tulips, of course). I like the order. I like the profusion. I like the underlying sense of usefulness. And the beauty.

So if this is to be the year when you start to grow some of your own food, what should you choose to grow? The things you best like to eat, is the obvious answer, but you have to balance that against other considerations. Some crops tie up space for longer than others. Some are easier to succeed with than others.

Amongst herbs, basil is a front-runner. If you need it, you need it in handfuls. It is easy from seed and grows happily on sunny windowsills, each plant in a 3-in pot of compost. Outside, both rosemary and sage grow well in pots. Being Mediterranean, they are used to drying winds and lack of rain. They'll take the exposure of a third-floor balcony. Parsley is not so easy. The seed is slow to germinate and the plants, with their long, carrot tap roots, hate to be transplanted. It is best sown in the open ground, perhaps as an edging to a bed of annuals.

Amongst fruit and vegetables, tomatoes come top of the list. They are as easy in pots and Growbags as they are in the open ground or a greenhouse. In Growbags, low-growing bush tomatoes are easier to manage than tall cordon types. Courgettes grow well in Growbags, too, the yellow-fruited kinds slightly more decorative than the green kinds. Tidy 'Gold Rush' (Marshall's, £1.23) or the round-fruited 'Tondo di Nizza' (Suffolk Herbs, 80p). Garlic is simple to grow, though it's better planted in autumn than in spring. Shallots would be an alternative. Climbing beans of all kinds are easy and excellent, if you can contrive a support for them. They are outrageously expensive in supermarkets, so with the money you have saved on your home-grown ones, you can splurge on some extra-good Australian wine to go with them.



Get vegetable seeds and plants from *The Organic Gardening Catalogue*, River Dene Estate, Molesey Road, Hershaw, Surrey KT12 4RG (01932 253666) - collections of cooking herbs or saladings, £10.99 for a dozen mixed plants; DT Brown and Co, Station Road, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire FY6 7HX (01253 882371) - organically produced seed of 26 varieties of herbs and vegetables, including climbing and dwarf beans, endive and tomato; SE Marshall & Co, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE13 2RF (01945 466711) - a wide range of vegetable and herb starter plants, dill, chives, marjoram, leeks, lettuce, tomatoes; Suffolk Herbs, Monks Farm, Coggeshall Rd, Kelvedon, Essex CO5 9PG (01376 572456) - an astonishing range of vegetables, especially Italian varieties and seeds for sprouting.

## CUTTINGS

Building up in commercial nurseries all over the country are stocks of the plants that will zap us in the garden centres this Easter. This year's novelties include a new choysa (Mexican orange blossom) called 'Walberton Moonshine'. All choysas have handsome, glossy evergreen foliage and sweetly scented flowers in April and May. But breeders promise that this new introduction has bigger, better flowers and glossier foliage than existing varieties. Judge for yourself when it hits the market in April. Also new this year will be the hebe 'Spring Glory', which produces its dark-purple flower spikes in April and May, rather than the more usual June and July.

The National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens has brought out a new guide to 600 plant collections all over the country. If you love hellebores, head for Hampshire where the local NCCPG group has 40 species and 69 cultivars scattered through the gardens of local NCCPG members. The collection is open by appointment from mid-February to the end of March, admission £1.50 (contact John Wood, on 01794 884306). If primroses are your thing, go to Ashby de la Zouch in Leicestershire, where Mrs Jackson has 80 different kinds. Admission £1 (open by appointment, 01530 412606). In Yorkshire, Mrs Shaw has a primrose collection too, at Tan Cottage, West Lane, Cononley, near Keighley (01535 632030). It is open by appointment only, admission £1. For a copy of the directory, send £3.50 (plus 50p for postage and packing) to the NCCPG, The Pines, RHS Garden, Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU24 6QP (01483 211463).

The Garden History Society's Winter Lecture series starts on 4 February when Eelco Elzinga describes one of The Netherlands' most important gardens, Het Loo, near Apeldoorn. It was laid out for William and Mary in the late 17th century by the Huguenot designer Daniel Marot, who had fled from persecution in France to The Netherlands.

He quickly found his feet, for in 1686, only a year after his arrival, he was employed by William and Mary to bring a touch of French glamour to the Dutch court. He tackled architecture, interior design and the garden, making all with equal verve. His work at Het Loo was considered at the time to be the last word in modernity and style. It was the most lavish garden ever to have been seen in The Netherlands and visitors gasped, especially at the cascades and fountains - more than 50 of them. The lectures continue every Wednesday until 18 March and include talks by the garden designer Arabella Lennox-Boyd, and Philip White, director of the Hestercombe garden project. All the lectures take place at the Scientific Societies Lecture Theatre, New Burlington Place, London W1, at 6pm. Tickets (£7 each) from the GHS, 77 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6BP (0171-608 2409).

Work in the garden in January is entirely at the mercy of the weather. If the ground is waterlogged (as ours is) it is better to stay off it until it dries out. But gardeners on fast-draining soil may be able to get out and stir up the earth round their bulbs. Aconites and snowdrops are well above ground and, as a treat, can be fed with a scattering of Growmore or bonemeal. Roses can also be pruned and tied in. All the old rules that used to govern rose-pruning as tightly as a Masonic convention seem to have gone by the board, but there is a useful general rule: the weaker the growth, the stronger the pruning. It seems the wrong way round, but cutting a sickly rose hard back is the best way to wake it up. If that is, it is ever going to wake up at all. It didn't work with my 'Agnes' rose.

Anna Pavord

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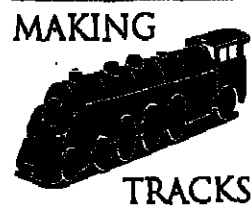
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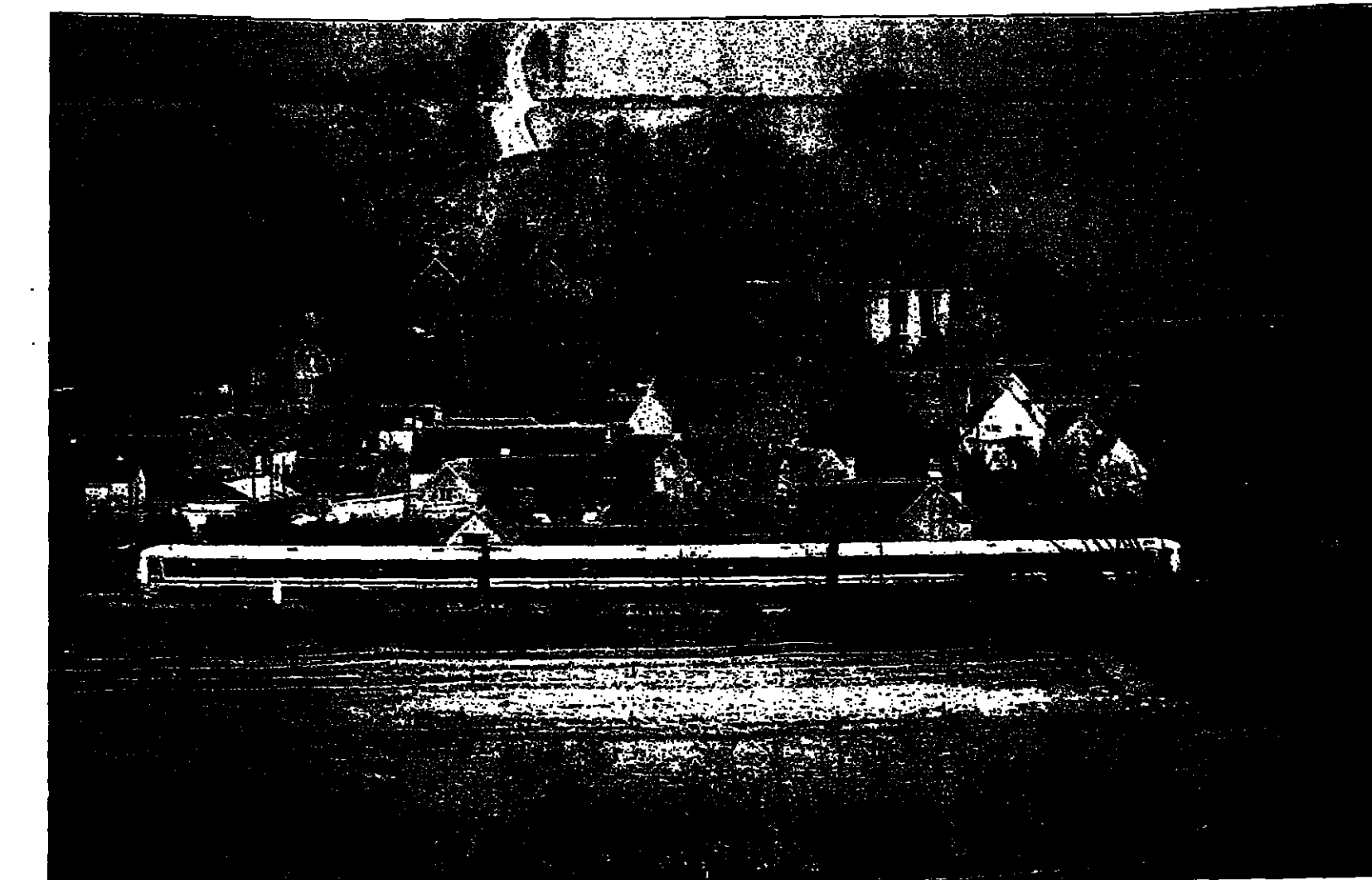
**Secret forests, flooded rivers and Civil War ghosts on a train ride across middle England: Matthew Broke continues his series on great short railway journeys.**

A delayed train can be a blessing. It offers you views that would normally whizz by at 100mph and lets you ponder the world outside your window. Travelling on Thames Trains this week, I became quite an experienced ponderer.

We had a signal failure, a defective freight train and a mandatory 5mph speed limit imposed without warning before I stopped listening to the announcements. So as we sat outside the well-to-do Oxfordshire village of Charlbury, I watched the cows and remarked to myself how gracefully they walked, not at all in the fat, clumsy way people often describe.

And I watched the village. Charlbury is typical of the Cotswolds: all honey-coloured stone and friendly postmen. Being on the main line to Oxford and London Paddington, it has kept its high house prices and its well-off clientele. Country folk can pop up to town for work or the theatre, then retreat from the pollution to their rural boltholes.

North from the station, the line follows the River Evenlode to Moreton-in-Marsh, just over the border in Gloucestershire. The wet winter had fattened the river, which had burst its banks, spectacularly in places. It is not the widest of rivers – in fact it is more of a brook – so it could be excused for overflowing. Perhaps it got bored with its



Rich country: whizzing through the Cotswolds at Ascot-under-Wychwood  
Photograph: John Lawrence

diminutive size and relished the opportunity to spread out a little.

The track passes close by Wychwood Forest, the "Secret Cotswold Forest" as the local writer Mollie Harris called it. This is all that remains of a vast, ancient, broadleaf woodland that spread across the Midlands. Oaks from Wychwood were said to have been used for Nelson's flagships.

The line loops round beyond the trees

and heads west for mile or so. I watched the new estates on the edge of Ascot-under-Wychwood slip by. The first stop was Kingham, near the village of Bledington, which boasts a Victorian maypole. As we approached, two young women opposite were talking animatedly about pensions and investments. What PEP to choose? Which life assurance?

This ride from Charlbury to the hand-

some, small market town of Moreton-in-Marsh is short (18 minutes) and trains run roughly once an hour. Local teenagers knew Moreton as a comical place for the presence of a building contractor called Spook Erection, whose rude logo was a smiling ghost with a bulge in his white sheet.

The sign hung by the railway bridge on the way into town. Either the firm went

out of business or moved, or the Cotswolds political correctness police waded in; Spook Erection is now a Budgens supermarket.

Moreton was originally Moreton Henmarsh and earned brief fame on Tuesday, 2 July, 1644, during the Civil War, when King Charles I stayed here. A chronicler of the time wrote: "From Deddington the army marched Tuesday morning, by Great

Tew where the Lord Viscount Falkland bath a faire howse, thence that night to Moreton Henmarsh where his Majestie lay."

His Majestie lay at the White Hart Royal Inn on High Street, or the Fosse Way to give it its grander title, that runs through the middle of the town. The inn staff must have been impressed with their visitor, because they named the bar after him, The Cavalier. Today, they say you can sit in front of the bar's huge fireplace and sip mine strome soup with Royalist ghosts.

In two weeks' time (on Saturday, 7 February) there is a guided walk from Moreton station starting at 10.40am and finishing in Stow-on-the-Wold (six miles). Or, if you are a keen cyclist, the Country Lanes Cycle Centre hires out bikes from Easter. The office is in the station.

Moreton, like many other small Cotswold towns, is an antiques buyer's dream. Some shops sell fine Jacobean chests, others scruffy railway signs and well-used kitchen tables. But, unlike its neighbours, it is an unassuming place that seems to have escaped the snobs. Maybe Spook Erection put them off.

**On the footplate**  
How much: Cheap day return (Charlbury - Moreton-in-Marsh): adults £4.20, children under 15 £2.10 (fares rise on 29 May)  
Who to call: Thames Trains 0345 484950 or (to book tickets) 0345 300700, or (for disabled travel) 0118 908 3607 at least 72 hours in advance. Country Lanes Cycle Centre 01608 650065. Guided walks with the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty service on 01452 425674.

## GAMES

### WILLIAM HARTSTON PEDANTS' CORNER - REFUTATIONS AND DENIALS

On Wednesday, Geoffrey Boycott said that he refuted all allegations of girlfriend-battering that were made against him. On Thursday, Mr Clinton, according to this newspaper "refuted charges of having an affair with Monica Lewinsky". It's enough to make a pedant despair. Neither Mr Clinton nor Sir Geoffrey refuted anything at all. They denied, they repudiated, they rejected, they rebuffed – but they didn't refute.

To refute means, as any good dictionary will tell you, to prove wrong. A dictionary whose standards are slipping may also mention the "colloquial" usage of "refute" as meaning "deny". But is this really one of those words on which we linguistic purists should surrender?

When Fowler wrote his *Modern English Usage* in 1926, he gave one brief paragraph to the word "refute", quoting the following sentence: "He sharply refuted the suggestion and said that he could produce ample evidence that it was wholly without foundation". Fowler's terse comment was: "He could refute the suggestion only by producing the evidence; till then he could only deny it."

Despite this clear advice, however, by the time Robert Burchfield came to revise Fowler in 1966, a

considerably expanded entry was needed. After explaining "the traditional meaning" of refute, Burchfield says: "At some point in the second half of the 20th century, however, traditionalists began to notice that people outside an educated social divide were beginning to use *refute* as a simple synonym of *deny*. He quotes an enraged letter to the *Spectator* in 1986: "In Mr Chancellor's day someone who didn't know the difference between 'refute' and 'deny' wouldn't have been employed by the *Spectator* as an office cleaner, let alone as a television critic."

The skirmishing continues, says Burchfield. "The likelihood that the new use represents a legitimate semantic shift is rejected by the traditionalists. Those who have no idea what a semantic shift might be, like the sound of *refute*, and will continue to use it in its partially standard new way. I have an uneasy feeling that the new sense will begin to sound normal in the 21st century – but not yet."

So what should we, proudly standing on the right side of the socio-linguistic tracks, and on first name terms with any number of semantic shifts, do about misused refutations? We have three options:

1) Wince and bear it, accepting, as Burchfield

appears to, that the battle is all but lost. Until the final defeat, our own refutations will, of course, still be accompanied with all the necessary paperwork, but we shall do no more than sigh when others refute when they should be simply denying.

2) Fight on, insisting that the distinction between refute and deny is too important to be blurred. We do not need another word meaning the same as "deny", but we ought not to deny ourselves a word with the original meaning of "refute". Even "rebut" does not quite have the force of "refute". After a rebuttal (denial with argument), the rally might continue. A refutation should be absolute.

3) Adopt the course advocated by Chambers *Guide to Grammar and Usage* which advises "To avoid ambiguity... it is necessary either to avoid the word *refute* altogether, or to make sure that there is sufficient information in the rest of the passage to make the intended meaning clear."

The following argument, I think, refutes both 1) and 3): In a few months' time President Clinton may appear in court to answer an allegation, from Ms Paula Jones, that his penis is curved. He will probably deny it. But just think of the shock if he refutes it. It really is an important difference.

### PANDORA MELLY GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Antony Jay, 67, co-author of 'Yes Minister'

At one stage I was a bridge obsessive. I have something in me that is rather competitive: I actually care more about winning than I think a properly balanced person should.

I played masses of games at boarding school. Three or four of us were really keen on *L'Ataque*, a game in which you were either the French or the English. *Dover Patrol* was the naval version, with mine-sweepers; or we'd play a massive thing called *Tri-Tactics* which was too much for all of us. It had an army, a navy and an air force to be deployed against the other side.

Thinking about it now, why weren't we playing games about fighting the Germans? It was 1940, and we'd already had one war against them, and here we were, fighting the French.

I suppose they're our traditional enemy. If you remember, during the Battle of Sebastopol in the Crimea, Lord Raglan kept referring to the Russians – who were the enemy – as the French – who were our allies.

He did that even at conferences with the French generals. Everybody was so used to fighting the French. It goes back to the Norman Conquest, probably, all Henry V and that sort of thing.

I think there's still an inclination in the British, that if we have to fight a European country, we'd rather fight the French than the Germans, despite the evidence of two world wars. They're nearer, so they're more of a threat.

Animal behaviourists tell us that young cubs play fighting games with each other to prepare for attacking proper animals, for survival as adults. I think there's an element of that in board games. Life is partly about pitting your wits against other people, and games are a kind of preparation. You feel you're doing intellectually what other animals do physically.

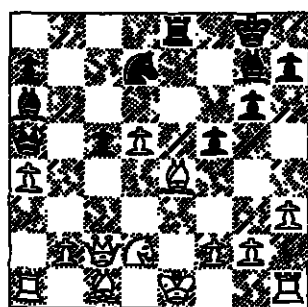
If you need to pit your wits against officialdom, you may pick up some useful hints from Antony Jay's book *How to Beat Sir Humphrey* – £6.99 from Long Barn Books.

### CHESS: WILLIAM HARTSTON

The 22-year-old Bulgarian grandmaster Veselin Topalov has been consistently ranked among the world's top half-dozen players for the past couple of years. His aggressive and imaginative style has made him one of the most exciting players to watch as well as one of the most successful, yet so far at least he seems to have lacked the all-round strategic depth needed to establish himself as a serious contender for the world title. He can wipe strong players from the board in brilliant style, but he does not seem to win those long, gruelling games that are the mark of a true heavyweight super-grandmaster.

Topalov's win against Loek van Wely in the third round at Wijk aan Zee is typical of his style. Playing Black in his favourite Modern Benoni, he sacrificed a pawn with 9...b5 (routine), then a piece with 11...Nxe4 (fairly conventional), then threw a rook in as well with 13...Qa5 and 14...Nd7 (outrageously imaginative).

The net result was the diagram position, after 16...Rxe8. Black is a rook and a pawn down, but will win the bishop on e4. The important feature, however, is the white king trapped in the centre, thanks to the effect of the bishop on a6. With his king under constant threat, van Wely was never given a chance to co-ordinate his forces and finally had to give

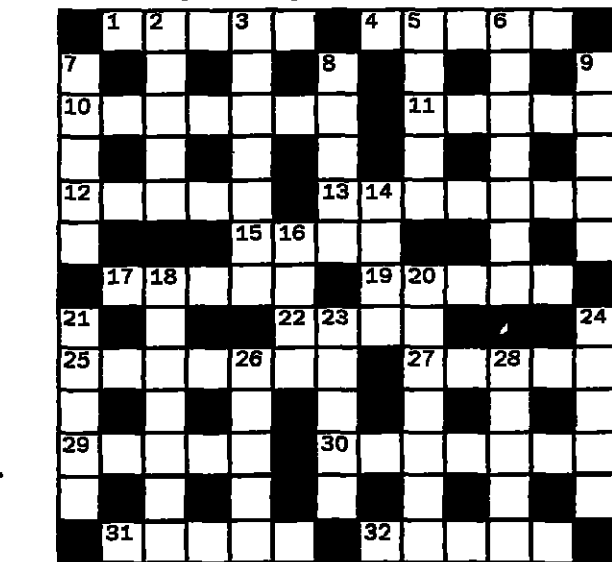


back his material gains with interest. I do not know whether Black's play was completely correct, but even if not, it all added up to a highly impressive performance from Topalov.

**White: Loek van Wely**  
**Black: Veselin Topalov**  
1 d4 Nf6 26 Kxc1 Rxf6  
2 c4 e5 27 Rd1 Qc6  
3 Nf3 c5 28 Kb1 Nxa4  
4 d5 d6 29 Qxc6 Rxc6  
5 Nc3 exd5 30 Rd8+ Kg7  
6 cxd5 g6 31 Rd7+ Kh6  
7 h3 Bg7 32 h4 Nc5  
8 e4 0-0 33 Rf7 Ne6  
9 Bd3 b5 34 Ka2 Ra6+  
10 Nxb5 Re8 35 Kb1 Nd4  
11 Nd2 Nxe4 36 Rf4 Nf5  
12 Bxe4 Ba6 37 Re4 Rd6  
13 a4 Qa5 38 Kc2 Ng3  
14 Nxd6 Nd7 39 Rg4 Nf1  
15 Qc2 f5 40 Kc3 Ne3  
16 Nxe8 Rxe8 41 Rg5 Ne5  
17 Kd1 fxe4 42 Rg4 Kh5  
18 Ra3 c4 43 b4 Ne3  
19 Rc3 Qxd5 44 Rd4 Rxd4  
20 Rxe4 Rf8 45 Kxd4 Nc2+  
21 f3 Nc5 46 Ke5 Nxb4  
22 Re7 Bf6 47 Kf6 Nd5+  
23 Rxa7 c3 48 Kg7 Ne3  
24 Rxa6 cxd2 White resigned  
25 Rxf6 dxc1(Q)+

### CONCISE CROSSWORD

No.3516 Saturday 24 January



#### ACROSS

- Cheerful (5)
- Snug (5)
- Form of sugar (7)
- Passenger vehicle (5)
- Machine tool (5)
- Morally strict person (7)
- Religious song (5)
- Time (mus.) (5)
- Leather strap (5)
- Small detachment (4)
- Study (4)
- London borough (7)
- Upper limit (7)
- Rascal (5)
- In want (5)
- Lines of poetry (5)
- Passage (5)
- Legal defence (5)

#### DOWN

- Berkshire racecourse (5)
- Type of radio programme (5-2)
- Become liable for (5)
- Encourage (7)
- Religious song (5)
- Time (mus.) (5)
- Leather strap (5)
- Small detachment (4)
- Study (4)
- London borough (7)
- Upper limit (7)
- Rascal (5)
- In want (5)
- Lines of poetry (5)
- Passage (5)
- Legal defence (5)

**Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:**

ACROSS: 5 Syllab, 8 Alluring (Silver lining), 9 Place, 10 Gridiron, 11 Cleft, 14 Sea, 16 Scroll, 17 Sliced, 18 Yak, 20 Idiot, 24 Apezuze, 25 Amass, 26 Ice-cream, 27 Scald, DOWN: 1 Gauge, 2 Mink, 3 Unfit, 4 Encore, 6 Yule logs, 7 Pacificed, 12 Academic, 13 Colossal, 14 Sly, 15 Ask, 19 Al-paca, 21 Trick, 22 Rupee, 23 Jemmy.

### BRIDGE: ALAN HIRON

Game all; dealer South  
North  
AKQ7  
K92  
10973  
73

West  
J95  
J53  
842  
J1096

East  
632  
A1086  
65  
8542

South  
1084  
Q74  
AKQJ  
AKQ

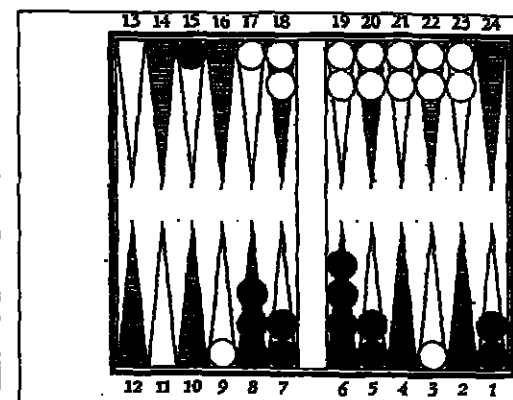
If you (as South) and your partner had bid accurately to Six Diamonds on this deal from match play, you might expect a small loss if your opponents had tried Six No-trumps instead. The diamond slam needed either 3-2 diamonds or, if they were 4-1, an even spade break. In Six No-trumps, however, a 3-3 spade break seemed essential and, as the cards lay, how could declarer have any problem?

At the other table, North-South had indeed bid the slam in No-trumps, but West was able to introduce a tiny diversion into the play – and South fell for it hook, line and sinker. So what happened after West made the natural lead of ♠J?

After winning, South started by cashing two of dummy's top spades and, lo and behold, the jack fell from West on the second round. Clearly, thought South, the spades were 4-2 and East still held S9.6. So he came to hand with ♠10 and was suitably infuriated when both opponents followed. The ♠K failed to provide the now much-needed entry to dummy when East refused to win ♠Q, and declarer ended with only 11 tricks.

Yes, it was a cunning move by West to drop ♠J on the second round, but if South proposed to lead a third round of the suit, he should have come to hand first before leading ♠10. Then when West follows sheepishly with his 9, the 10 can safely be overtaken.

### BACKGAMMON: CHRIS BRAY



When deciding whether to take a double, the basic rule is that you must expect to be able to win 25 per cent of the games. That figure is valid only in cases where you do not expect to lose many gammons, but let's not complicate things for the moment. Because the next roll after a double is usually crucial, a good way to evaluate a position is to look at a cross-section of 36 games (the number of possible dice rolls) and estimate whether you can win nine of them.

Take this position from the recent Biba tournament at Brighton. Double Fives aficionado Julian Fetterlein was playing White against a weaker player when he ventured a double. His opponent should have reasoned as follows:

"How many games out of 36 can I win? Julian has a direct shot at a blot which, if he hits it, would guarantee winning the game and maybe a few, but not very many, gammons. So he has 17 good numbers (all 6's, 2's, 3's, 4's, 2's, 5's, 1's). But what of the race? Before the roll I lead 91-100. If Julian doesn't hit the shot the race is likely to be about even with me on roll. Of nine of his numbers (11, 12, 21, 13, 31, 14, 41, 23, 32) I will get a shot at his blot, and he still has a man trapped in my board. Of the 19 numbers where Julian doesn't hit my blot I am a substantial favourite, especially as I own the cube. I estimate that I could win 14 or 15 of those 19 games. I only need to win nine games to be able to accept the double, therefore I take."

Sadly for him, his reasoning went awry and he dropped it. Fear of the direct shot dominating his thinking, Full marks to Julian for an aggressive double which paid dividends. It is on by evaluating the position methodically that you can reach the correct decision. Jellyfish, incidentally, evaluates the position as No double/ take, preferring to double out its opponent if hits the shot.



# 13/OUTDOORS

THE INDEPENDENT  
SATURDAY 24 JANUARY 1998  
13

## Great Chieftain o' the puddin'-race

Tomorrow is Burns Night – but before you grab a haggis and a bottle of single malt, spare a thought for Burnsians. Robert Burns's poetry has stood the test of time, but keeping his name alive owes a lot to the tradition of formal celebrations, as Jennifer Rodger discovered.

The majestic sound of bagpipes introduces a frugal dish – and so begins Burns Supper. The tradition originated in 1780, when Robert Burns founded the Bachelors' Debating Club in Tarbolton for any "cheerful, honest-hearted lad, who if he has a friend that is true and a mistress that is kind, and as much wealth as genteely to make both ends meet – is just as happy as this world can make him". After Burns's death, a cult quickly grew, and suppers were held based on the lively ethos of the Bachelors' Club.

When Burns died, 50,000 people lined the streets of Dumfries to watch his funeral cortege go by. Since then more than 2,000 editions of his poems and songs have been published. His popularity shows no signs of waning: last year "A Red, Red Rose" was chosen as the nation's third favourite poem.

The first official Burns club was established in 1801: there are now 400 worldwide, and more than half a million Burns Suppers are held every year.

Burns's biographer, Hugh Douglas, warns in his *Burns Supper Companion*, "... when to start [planning]. If you are reading this on 26 January, then it is not a minute too soon." The sheer number of clubs means that the Burns season can last until February. David Smith, honorary secretary of the Burns Federation, began plans a year ago for the Burns Howff Club Supper at the Globe Inn, Dumfries. This year's speaker of the Immortal Memory toast, the Scottish Secretary of State Donald Dewar, was asked to attend five years ago. The affair is held in Robert Burns's favourite "howff", or watering-hole. The supper is traditional: the haggis is piped in, a recitation of "To A Haggis" is made, then the "Immortal Memory" and toasts to the Lassies are spoken.

The Glasgow Thistle Hotel holds half a dozen major Burns Suppers in January. "The most important thing is to put on a good show of warm hospitality," says Tim Hunt, the manager. "Burns was a poet for mankind; he wanted us all to be brothers."

The largest Burns Supper in the world was held on 17 January this year, for 1,000 people. The International Burns Supper organisation has taken Burns to Russia, America and England. "Burns was a Communist, a man who believed in the brotherhood of man," says Mr Campbell, the honorary president. "His poetry may have been incomprehensible in Russian, but they knew the sentiment."

The only cloud on the horizon is that subsequent generations may find Burns's language impenetrable. The Burns Federation is already taking steps to avoid such a disaster. One such initiative is West Sound's trophy for Young Burnian of the Year. This year there were 165,000 entries.

At West Sound's Supper, the former Beirut hostage Tom Sutherland spoke the "Immortal Memory". Describing the so-lace Burns's poems gave him during his imprisonment, Sutherland said: "On and on the memories come, so many hours did Burns fill my mind and heart and bring the company of past suppers and friends, that I made it through to the next day."

**Ingredients for a Burns Supper**  
Haggis (Safeway has a special offer, Hall's haggis, 454g, 99p; for non-meat eaters, Savacore offers MacKintosh's vegetarian haggis, 454g, at 99p). Chapit tattie (mashed potato); mashed neeps (swede); whisky, and, of course, Burns's poetry. *Hugh Douglas's Burns Supper Companion* (Johnnie Walker/ Alloway Publishing, Ayr) includes important poems.

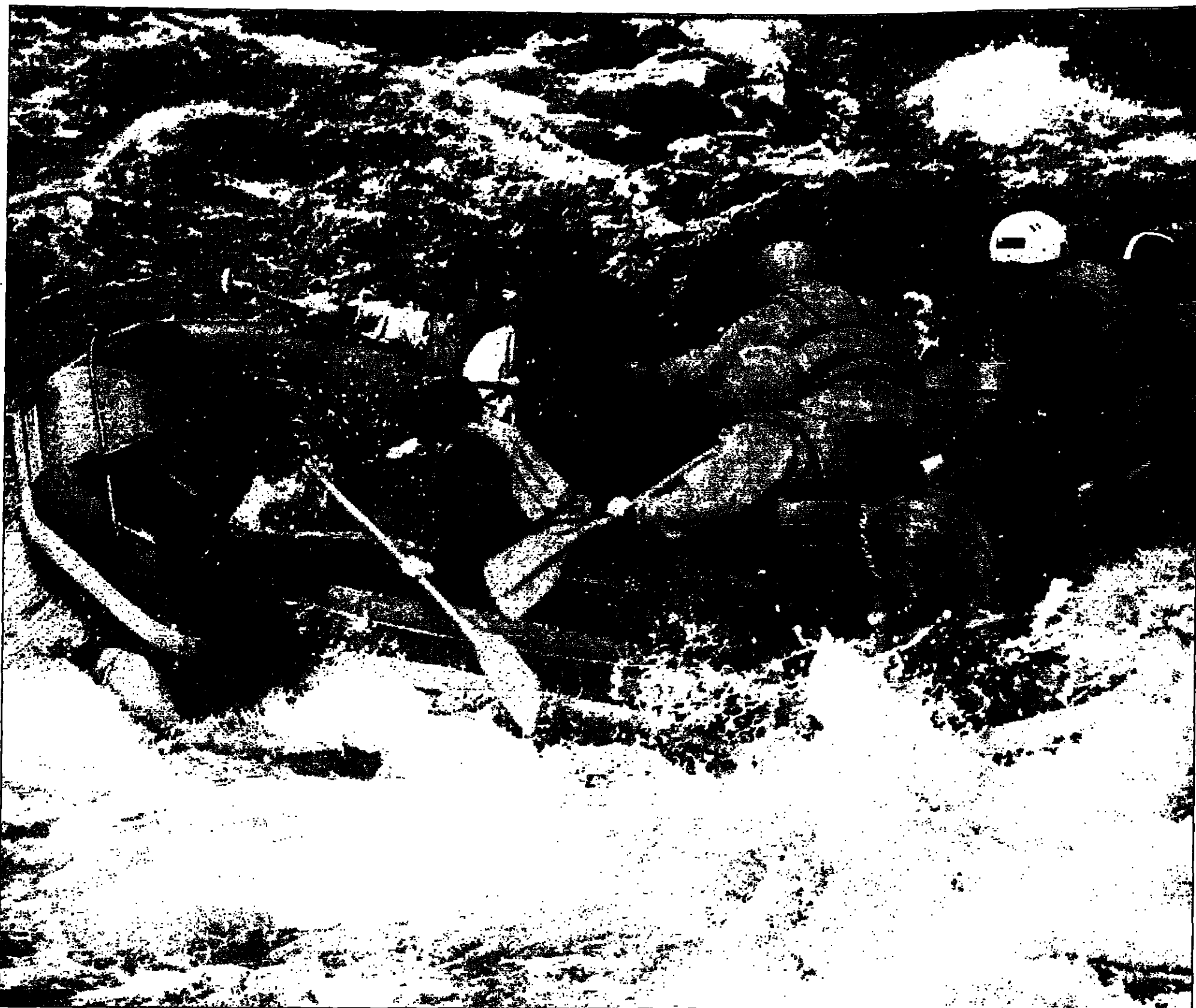
### Order of service

A piper plays as the main guests enter in procession, and the Selkirk Grace is said: "Some hae meat and canna eat/ And some wad eat that want it/ But we hae meat and we can eat/ And see the Lord by thankit."

The haggis is carried in, preceded by the piper. The chef is offered a glass of whisky, and at this point the "Ode to A Haggis" is read: "Fair fa' your honest, sossie face/ Great Chieftain o' the Puddin'-race! Aboon them a' ye tak your place/ Paunch, tripe or thairms/ Weel are ye wordy of a grace/ As lang's my arm."

### Toasts at the supper

The "Immortal Memory", a toast to the works or life of Burns, usually lasts 20-30 minutes. Hugh Douglas writes: "If the speaker succeeds then he will have inspired his audience to try to rediscover their true selves, to think more kindly about their fellow men..." The Lassies, O: a toast to the ladies. The Lassies: the ladies reply.



Adrenaline addiction: in Britain the finest rafting rivers are in the Scottish Highlands

Photograph: Northsport/Viewpoint

## Nature's foam bath

**You're out of control, plunging into utter turbulence – and you're high on adrenaline. Even in Scotland, writes Hamish Scott, white-water rafting is addictive.**

The deep, slow-flowing river seems deceptively benign as you drift downstream through broad meanders. Occasionally you paddle with a gentle rhythm, keeping time with your companions to negotiate an eddy or some placid pool, but more usually the bulbous rubber raft follows its own nose along the currents like a lazy cart-horse plodding a familiar lane.

Lulled into a dream of riverine contentment, you feel absurdly overdressed in wet-suit, life-jacket and crash-helmet... until the current sweeps you gently round another bend and you see what lies ahead.

A swollen wall of water announces the approaching rapids.

Beyond, the river plunges out of sight. "Hard forward!" shouts the guide, as he steers the raft mid-stream.

For a moment you retain some semblance of control before the prow tilts briefly to the sky, then dips and plunges down into the maelstrom. Now you're living for each second.

Paddles racket off the foaming rocks, spray hits you in the face and the raft careers over another lip. Braced against the impact, you paddle frantically, balanced like a rider on a bucking bronco and whooping with exhilaration as the torrent rips and buffets through the gorge.

"Down!" The guide's command is scarcely audible above the roar. Six bodies throw themselves into the belly of the raft, which lurches upwards in a final fling, then thuds into a swirling pool of deep, untroubled water. As you struggle back into a dignified position and wipe the spray out of your eyes, the guide is still

poised nonchalantly on the stern. "That was the Washing Machine," he says. "Grade three-plus. The next one's rather more exciting."

Excitement is the essence of white-water rafting, although, as any guide will reassure participants, the real risks involved are slight. Modern rafts, tough inflatables with multiple flotation chambers, are virtually unsinkable when commanded by a skilful helmsman, and, so long as proper safety gear is worn, even a brief ducking in the water should injure little more than pride. This is not, however, the impression gathered by a novice who has never, in the usual course of life, plunged head-first down a waterfall. The experience is memorable.

Most guides employed by reputable rafting companies are skilled white-water kayakers whose idea of a mild challenge would be to overturn without a paddle above a cataract in an Andean canyon. As rafting guides

they can both subsidise their habit, and introduce quite innocent members of the public to the adrenaline-fuelled roots of their addiction. After being churned and hurled through the Washing Machine, dry land can feel a little dull, and, for many, a further cycle is imperative.

In Britain, the finest rafting rivers are in the Scottish Highlands, most particularly the Tay and River Orchy. With the severity of rapids graded one to six, Granddaddy on the Tay merits three, quite sufficient for most undeveloped tastes, while some stretches of the Orchy can be virtually ungradable in autumn flood. But the pleasure to be found in rafting does not entirely lie in momentary terror. Rivers are man's oldest highways, and there is a primeval sense of sat-

isfaction and discovery to be found in negotiating a long watercourse from mountainside to plain.

Travelling for two days down the Tummel and the Tay, camping overnight on lonely riverbanks, the rafter can experience an almost prehistoric sense of place within an ever-changing landscape that presents some new delight or challenge with each turn of the current. There is still a wild Britain, not glimpsed from any motorway.

For true addicts of white water the most intense experiences are, however, found abroad. The alpine streams that radiate from Briançon in France are perhaps the best in western Europe, but even they cannot compare with the Marsyangdi, the "raging river" of Nepal that cataracts

through endless miles of Himalayan gorges. Trips through this remote area must be booked at least six months in advance. Alternatively, the Zambezi river in Zimbabwe offers an exciting challenge in a climate that precludes the need for any wetsuit.

River-deep and mountain-high, the world is foaming with white water, and experience is not required for its enjoyment. Just steady nerves, life-jacket and crash helmet... and a trusted guide.

**Splash White Water Rafting (01887 829706)** organises year-round trips in Scotland, Europe, Africa and Asia.

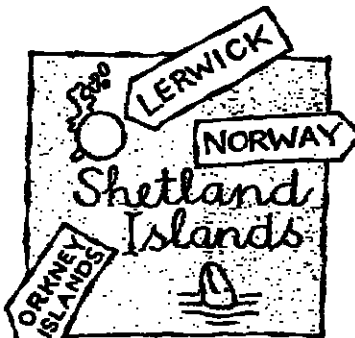
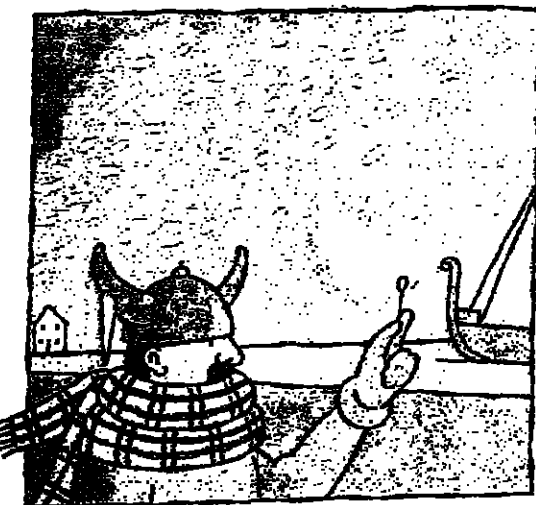
**The Scottish Rafting Association** will provide up-to-date information on rafting activities and river conditions. Call 01887 830633.

## WHAT, WHEN, WHERE?

Go north to the Shetland Islands and party in style at the Up-Helly-Aa fire festival in Lerwick, a reminder of the days when Norse settlers celebrated the end of the yule holidays. Bands of guisers (Shetlanders in Viking kit) led by their chief, the Guiser Jarl, parade town before setting alight a 30-ft longship in the harbour. Viking revelry follows

throughout the night at various venues, including the Town Hall, which stipulates that stiletto heels are not allowed, although presumably spiky helmets are. Up-Helly-Aa takes place on Tuesday 27 January. More information from the Shetland Islands Tourism Office (01595 693434).

Sally Kindberg



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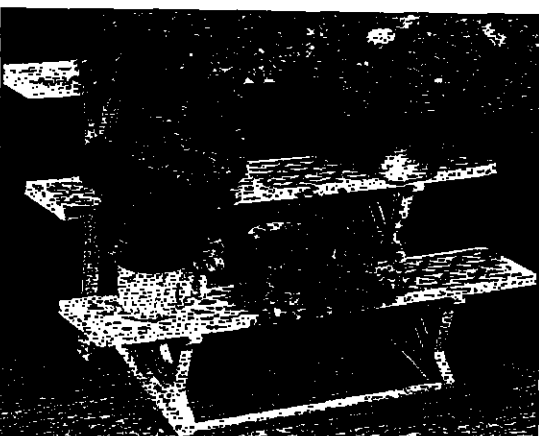
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## Silly Cup songs and why everyone is putting their shirts and scarves on Stevenage



MIKE  
ROWBOTTOM

ON THE  
FA CUP AND  
THE FAME  
FACTOR

FA Cup runs are a bit like family Christmases - certain traditions must be observed.

And this week Stevenage Borough, the non-League team who meet Newcastle in tomorrow's fourth round, have served up traditional Cup fare with all the trimmings. (Sorry, I forgot to honour another little Cup tradition there - Mighty Newcastle).

The inhabitants of the Hertfordshire New Town have reacted with time-honoured fervour to the progress of their representatives, who have already disposed of two Nationwide League sides, Cambridge United and Swindon Town, en route to tomorrow's momentous collision.

The number of home masochists who will accompany Boro

Bear around the ground on the day of the big match has had to be pegged to four. Meanwhile the club's merchandising operation has gone bonkers.

"If it's red and white and it says Stevenage Borough it's selling itself at the moment," said the club's dazed commercial manager, Clive Abrey. "It has been unbelievable."

Scarves? Two years' supply gone in three weeks. Barmy Army versus Boro Army sweatshirts? Couldn't get enough on the stalls.

And the man who makes the replica team shirts ran out of material. Before he did, at least two dozen had gone north east to satisfy the demands of Sunderland and Middlesbrough fans, for reasons one can only speculate over...

In years to come, those fans will re-discover their unprepossessing white-with-funny-red-diagonal-stripe purchases, and wonder: Why did I bother?

They too are part of the great tradition, spiritually akin to the Crystal Palace fans who lumbered themselves with fedoras which replicated those worn by their flamboyant manager Malcolm Allison during the 1976 Cup run to the semi-finals. Or the Brighton fans who, in misguided tribute, purchased versions of the white disco-dancing shoes favoured by their twinkle-toed manager Jimmy Melia as the Seagulls made their way to the 1983 FA Cup final.

But if these strange quirks represent the crackling, roast potatoes and brussels sprouts

of the Cup-run repast, there is no mistaking the traditional turkey - the club song.

You don't expect much of a football song. Not melody. Not wit. Not even sense. But you do expect rhyme.

"Blue is the colour, football is the game, we're all together, and winning is our aim." It's a midfield workhorse, it gets up and down. As does this: "Good old Arsenal, we're proud to sing that name. While we sing this song we'll win the game."

Well, perhaps that one shouldn't be dignified with the title of workhorse. You can't deny, though, that it rhymes. So fine, we know where we stand.

Three Lions confused the issue for a while, being a song which combined a recognisable tune with something scarcely

close to real feeling. But in the footballing canon, it stood out like Alberto Tarantini at Birmingham City.

In the country of the footballing anthem, one-eyed orthodoxy is all. And the ditty currently being played on every local radio station within a 100 mile radius of Stevenage fits nicely into the landscape - give or take a little local variation.

"We're so proud to be the crowd, who are going to shout it loud, Stevenage... Stevenage... Stevenage, we're loud and proud." Never mind the Three Lions, feel those three rhymes.

It's very much the anthem in form. But then... perplexingly... this "Newcastle or Swindon Town, No one's going to shout us down, Boro, Boro, Boing-boing-boing, You're the boys that's

always going to make us sing."

As Hamlet once lamented, what a falling off was there. Why, I wondered, couldn't it have been "bing-bing-bing"? Same difference - still meaningless - but a rhyme with sing?

I turned for explanation to the man responsible for the words and music of Hertfordshire's fastest moving new entry, the Stevenage Borough announcer, Andrew Green.

And the answer was that when Stevenage are on the attack, their supporters like to sing - to the tune of Guanabara, naturally - "Boing in a minute, we're going to be in a minute..." Or sometimes, for no apparent reason, they just like to go: "Boing boing Boro."

Where does the chant come from? Someone at the club thought it had something to do with West Bromwich Albion. What does it mean, exactly? No one knows. Ah, the insane mystery of it all...

When Mr Green is not transmitting his voice across Broadhall Way he is an independent radio producer who has also presented Radio Three's In Tune programme, featuring everything from Mozart and Beethoven to Benjamin Britten and Vaughan Williams.

It would be nice to think some of the classical influences had carried over into his most recent enterprise - and it would also be quite wrong.

How long, I asked, had the whole thing taken him to compose? "About half an hour," he said.

SUPER BOWL XXXII: GREEN BAY PACKERS v DENVER BRONCOS

## Elway seeks the ring of ultimate approval

A three-time loser is pulling in the sympathy vote for tomorrow's showdown on the gridiron. Nick Holling reports from San Diego.

In the ruthlessly professional business of sport in the United States, there is little place for sentiment. That is particularly true at the Super Bowl, where the winners are feted as conquering champions, while the losers are left to slink home as best they can under a cloak of anonymity.

The unforgiving emptiness of defeat in the big game is something Denver's quarterback, John Elway, has experienced three times during a long and illustrious career. On Sunday, he faces the prospect of another painful loss as his Broncos take on the defending champions, the Green Bay Packers, in Super Bowl XXXII. Few people are giving the 37-year-old Elway much hope - the bookmakers have installed the Packers as 12-point favourites - but there is little doubt that should he somehow confound the naysayers, Elway's achievement will be hailed as one of the most heart-warming stories in the history of the game.

Elway has achieved so much since joining the Broncos 15 years ago, that few would begrudge him his title. Even the Packers' head coach, Mike Holmgren, has sensed the mood of the nation. "I think a lot of people are going to root for John Elway," he said. "I have coached quarterbacks all my life, and it's not often you get a chance to be around a player like John. He's done so much that I fully understand the sentiment towards him."

With his decade and a half of unbroken service, and with

an unblemished record away from the gridiron, Elway is seen as the embodiment of all that is good in the game. It is a far cry from when he entered the league in 1983. By virtue of possessing the poorest record in the NFL that year, the feeble Baltimore Colts announced their intention to select the exciting youngster from Stanford University in the annual collegiate draft. Elway promptly announced that he had no intention of joining a bunch of losers like the Colts, threatening instead to pursue a promising baseball career with the New York Yankees.

Eventually a compromise was reached, Elway joining the Broncos, Baltimore being compensated with a collection of draft picks. In hindsight, his decision was a sound one (the Colts again finished with the worst record this season) but traditionalists were outraged. You went where you were drafted: the young upstart's arrogance threatened the very fabric of the game.

In the intervening years, all has been forgiven and forgotten. In a game obsessed with statistics, Elway's achievements are easy to measure. Second only to Miami's Dan Marino in career passing yards (48,669); second in total offence (51,982); and fifth in career touchdown passes with 278. He has generated 44 game saving drives, more than any other quarterback in history; he has completed a remarkable 123,000-yard passing seasons, and is one of only two players to rush for over 3,000 and pass for over 40,000 yards in his career.

Yet against these numbers must be set the fact that Elway took his team to the championship game in three years out of four in the late 1980s and was found wanting every time. The New York Giants beat the Broncos 39-20 in Super Bowl XXI, the Washington Redskins

overwhelmed them 42-10 a year later, and in Super Bowl XXIV, the ultimate humiliation, a 55-10 loss to San Francisco, the most lopsided scoreline in Super Bowl history. Elway's personal tally from the three disasters: 46 completions from 101 pass attempts, two touchdowns and six interceptions.

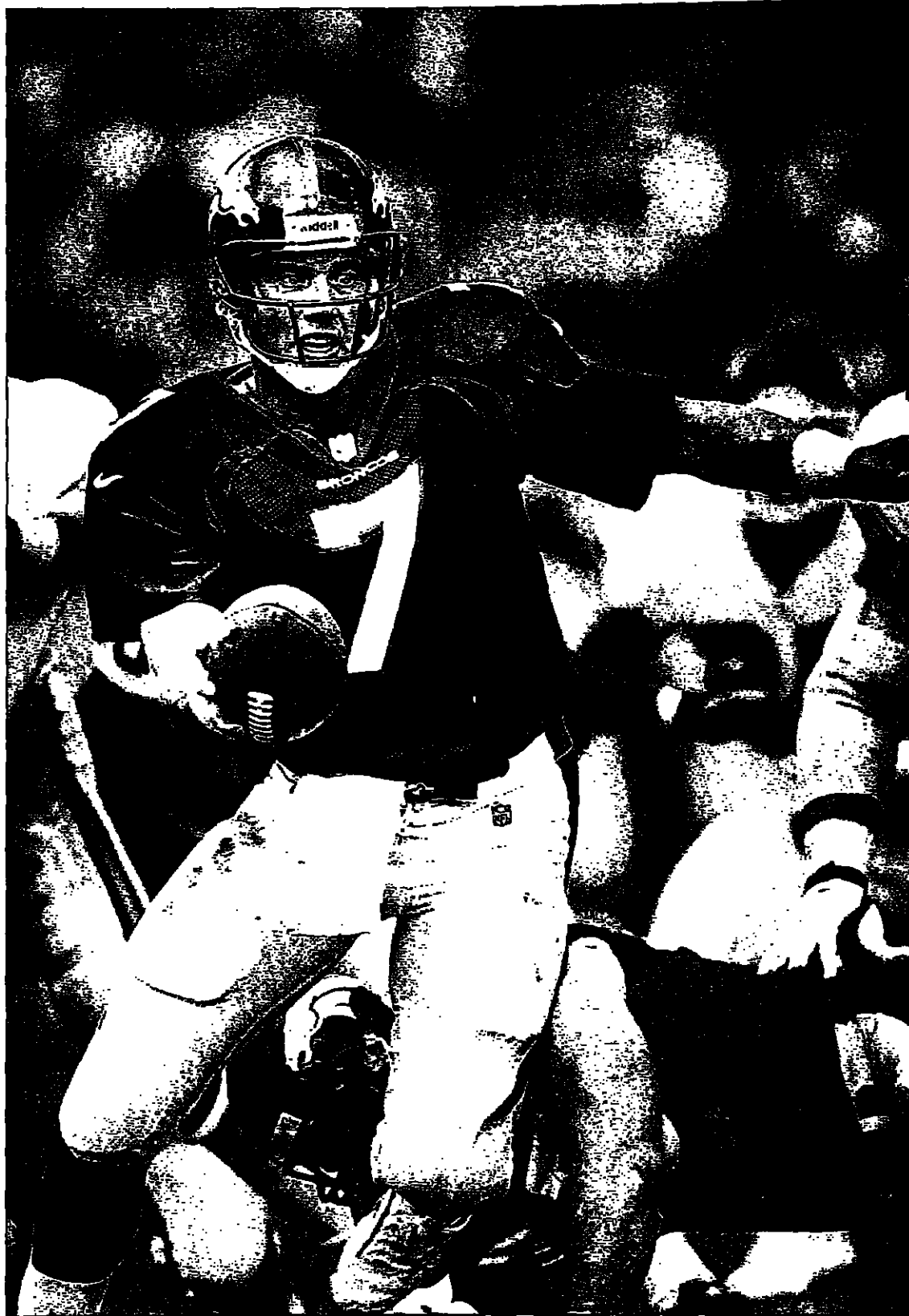
"John's problem is that he's been babied by everybody," said the former quarterback Terry Bradshaw, a four-time winner with Pittsburgh, following the San Francisco debacle. "Is he a great quarterback? No, he's very good, but he's too inconsistent. He has to get better emotionally."

"Time has eased some of the pain, but it was really rough going through it at the time," Elway said. "I'm not as good a player physically now, but I'm a better quarterback mentally. I don't take as many chances with the ball as I used to, and I'm making better decisions. Experience makes up for a lot of things."

What it cannot compensate for is the quality of the opposition, and in Green Bay, Elway faces another daunting challenge. Led by the defensive end Reggie White, the Packers boast an uncompromising defence which effectively shut down Tampa Bay and San Francisco in the play-offs, and will be confident of delivering a similar fate to the Broncos.

The pre-game talk has been dominated not by the Packers and their quest to defend their title, but by whether an older, wiser quarterback can grab what might be his last chance at immortality. Elway, a smooth, experienced media operator, has been saying all the right things, putting the game into perspective, and saying how it pales into insignificance alongside his feelings for his wife and four children.

However, he understands



that in this win-at-all-costs business, Elway risks being labelled as the man who could not win the one that matters. And in one of the most revealing moments of an otherwise predictable week, he

was asked if he would trade his individual accomplishments for one Super Bowl ring. The answer was immediate. "Yes. In a heartbeat." On Sunday, a nation will be hoping it happens.

Looking for a winning way: John Elway has to lose the tag of a quarterback who cannot win the big one if he is to acquire greatness. He may have his last chance tomorrow when the his Denver Broncos take on the Green Bay Packers. Photograph: Allsport

## History and Favre dog underdogs

History and current form suggest that Green Bay will prove too strong for the Denver Broncos, but the underdogs are not without hope, and if they can keep the Packers in their sights going into the second half, an upset in Super Bowl XXXII is a possibility.

If the Broncos manage to execute a flawless game, they stand every chance. In their running back Terrell Davis, they have a player who pounded out 1,700 yards during the season. Containing Davis will be crucial for the Packers, and much will depend on the fitness of defensive tackle Gilbert Brown. When he is healthy, Green Bay are notoriously difficult to run against, but Brown has been slowed by an ankle injury in recent weeks.

"The key for us to win is to just play our game," said the Packers' formidable defensive end, Reggie White. "If we don't, this Denver team will definitely beat us. They are capable of beating anybody." Should Davis fail to impose himself on the contest, the Broncos could lose heavily. In contrast, the Packers have an arsenal of offensive weaponry at their disposal, sufficient to keep the best prepared defence off balance.

Their quarterback, Brett Favre, is guilty of occasional lapses in concentration, but no one can match his capacity to create something out of nothing. His primary targets, Robert Brooks and Antonio Freeman, are both potential match-winners, while in tight end Mark Chmura, the Packers have a sure-handed, reliable performer. When they run the ball, Dorsey Levens is effective behind the punishing blocks of full-back William Henderson.

"Everybody knows about Green Bay's offense, those guys are just explosive," said the Broncos' cornerback, Ray Crockett. "They can make big plays any time, and they have the best quarterback in the game."

In the National Football League, size matters, and it is at the line of scrimmage that the Packers enjoy a big advantage. Green Bay's offensive front will look to dominate their lighter, faster opponents. If they are successful, Favre will have the time he needs to run riot.

Denver's quarterback, John Elway, will need time too, a commodity likely to be in short supply should the Packers utilise the power of White and the speed of the linebackers Seth Joyner and Brian Williams.

In four previous Super Bowl attempts, Denver have never come close to victory. In contrast, the Packers have yet to taste defeat, and have compiled an NFL record 12 championships in their distinguished history. Tomorrow evening in southern California, 13 looks like being unlucky for the Broncos.

- Nick Holling, San Diego

## Beachley rises to high priestess in the temple of machismo

Time was when Hawaii's big waves were only for the big boys. Now, when the surf is high, it's the babes who are no longer content just to decorate the beach.

"You're out?" Ken Bradshaw once scathingly exclaimed in the line-up at Waimea Bay. "Then I'm going in - it must be too small!" He happened to be addressing Banzai Betty (Betty Depolito, now a surf-video producer) at the time - almost a decade ago - but it could have been just about any woman.

Women were chicks and they belonged on the beach, certainly not at the temple of machismo that is the Bay. The realm of big-wave riding used to be more exclusive than the Catholic Church where women were concerned, more phallic-centric than football.

It is a measure of how much the whole scene has evolved that Bradshaw - Bradshaw - the

Monk, the guardian of orthodoxy - is now not just consorting with Layne Beachley, but actually surfing with her at big Waimea. Beachley, admittedly, has just taken the inaugural women's Triple Crown title (for the best aggregate result in a trio of contests around the North Shore), winning the Quiksilver Roxy Pro at Sunset Beach and moving up to the No 2 spot in the world rankings.

Beachley, 25, from Sydney, has made the North Shore her second home. Although Lisa Andersen, from Florida, has taken the world title for the fourth time in a row and is generally described as "ripping like a guy", it is Beachley who has been earning the respect for her performances, specifically in big waves. The Roxy was contested in 8-12ft surf with most of Beachley's rivals clamouring to call it off. "No girls surf Sunset," she said, "so it was easy for me."

So far there is not a single woman's name on the list of invitees for the Eddie Aikau contest (20ft minimum waves), but



ANDY  
MARTIN

NEWS  
FROM  
THE  
NORTH  
SHORE

Beachley could ultimately be the one. "I'm not ready for 20-plus," she said when I spoke to her at the Coffee Gallery in Haleiwa after a dawn patrol with Bradshaw. "I want to be in a control situation - not a survival situation." But she is credited with being the only woman out in 15-18 feet.

She ate the kind of hearty breakfast that might have tested Desperate Dan: a "surf bum" burrito followed by a waffle and not one but two yogurt "cups" (bucket would be more apt) piled high with fruit and granola.

Had there been a cow pie on the menu she would have had that too. The last person I came across to burn calories on this scale was Greg LeMond on the Tour de France. And the surfing circuit is not so much a prolonged holiday (as most people fondly imagine), but more like a year-long world-wide epic of endurance and stamina.

There is a small but significant presence of iron women on the North Shore. Out of 300 lifeguards on the island of Oahu only five are women. On the North Shore there is only one: Sue Stewart, from Huntington Beach on the West Coast, a real-life Baywatch babe who could outpower David Hasselhoff in the water let alone Pamela Anderson.

When she is not pulling

300lb, 6ft 5in Oklahoma farmers out of the rip in 8ft Pipeline, she dives off a 40ft rock at Waimea Falls for fun.

She was working the Bay the day Donnie Solomon died in 20-plus waves. "He tried to duck-dive under a three-wave set. But he got turned over and we saw him go down. But by the time we got to him there was just too much water and sand in his lungs," Stewart said. "There's nothing worse than watching someone go down - and you can't do a thing about it."

Her predecessor here is Debbie Wayman (née Bowers), who is probably the only woman born in South Ruislip to become first a pro surfer (rising as high as No 2), then a lifeguard, and finally a firefighter, after moving to Hawaii as a kid.

She was the only girl to surf her local break at Ewa beach where she acquired her nickname of "motor arms". But even she - Sigourney Weaver's long-lost twin - was shy of big Waimea.

"Everybody had the idea

that I would be the one," Wayman said. "But that was beyond my limits. You have to know them otherwise you become part of the problem not the solution."

She carried out some joint rescues with the guy who occupied the tower next to hers and ended up marrying him. They used to compete in life-guard contests together, but she is fitter and faster than he is. "In running, paddling, swimming, I've got him, but he can cook better than I can."

The toughest thing about being a woman lifeguard is that half the people you rescue - all the guys - slope off without ever saying thank you, humiliated at being rescued by a woman.

Maybe there was a touch of that emotion the day that Johnny Boy Gomes, the newly ratified Pipeline Master, punched the Australian pro Jodie Cooper, adding by way of justification, "If you're going to surf like a guy I'm going to treat you like a guy." It was a back-handed kind of compliment.



Iron woman: Layne Beachley Photograph: Tim Clayton

Women are now being taken seriously in a way they never were before. They have a new dedicated magazine, *Surfer Girl*. And they are attracting proportionately more attention and sponsorship (Beachley has Billabong and Oakley behind her).

Surfing is a microcosm and mirror of the culture at large. The Rell Sunn funeral last weekend - which coincided with the Martin Luther King holiday - symbolised a massive shift in the collective consciousness. Three thousand

people came to Makaha to celebrate the life of this pioneering surf pro and first female lifeguard in Hawaii as her ashes were scattered over her favourite break.

More than two centuries ago, when Captain Cook first came across these islands, he was astonished to observe not just the spectacle of surfing itself, but also that men and women were equally adept in water sports. The mass surf-in in honour of Rell Sunn testifies to the re-birth of the Hawaiian waterwoman.











## Sportsmen from across the board spend a week in the land of make-believe



CATHERINE RILEY

SPORT  
ON TV

While John Inverdale may have started the second day of coverage of the Australian Open (BBC2) with the words: "Every major tennis championship wants a real roller-coaster five-setter early on to give the whole thing a lift", what the BBC did not want was its golden boy, Tim Henman, being taken for a ride.

Inverdale, less happy in front of the camera than behind a microphone, was affecting a strange slant to the right, perhaps in an attempt to distance himself from the screen in the background showing footage of the offending tennis player.

In what appeared to be a fit of pique directed at Henman's inability to win and thus keep up the viewing figures, the Beeb glossed over the first four sets,

joining the action at 6-6 in the final set "amid all the tension". Tension? With only half an hour of highlights each afternoon from the first Grand Slam event of the season, engendering tension is something the BBC will have to work a little harder on.

With our brave Brit soon 6-7 down to a qualifier, Chris Bailey said authoritatively: "The thing for Henman to do now is settle back and relax." Difficult at the best of times, and especially so when you are receiving balls, as Bailey expounded, "in the hitting zone". What he failed to explain was why Henman was missing them.

The rear-view shots of Henman were disconcerting, his dark hair merging into the thick black stripe down the back of his Adidas-sponsored

shirt. A skunk, perhaps, but without an obvious weapon of attack. Addis may well now reconsider their sponsorship plans, given the amount of exposure they got from Henman compared to the world-wide coverage of Temur Kettsaba's wild celebrations last weekend at St James' Park.

Shell-shocked and wide-eyed in the studio afterwards, Henman shifted uncomfortably in his chair, perhaps fearing the next question would ask if the stripe down his back was perhaps turning yellow.

Inverdale, a hunched model of sympathy, smirked: "Tim, as they say in the trade, very very down on himself."

Britain's other hope, Greg Rusedski, on the other hand, was victorious and so was inter-

viewed with a Union Jack backdrop, rather than the Australian Open logo Henman endured. The message was hard to miss. He won, therefore he's a real Brit. The following day, in a last-minute addition to the schedule, "a bonus for all tennis fans", the smiling boy appeared on a programme devoted exclusively to his match with Jonathan Stark.

Another victory and an extended, worshipful interview with Barry Davies, again in front of that backdrop which this time had his name superimposed across it. Goodness knows how the BBC will top that, should he carry on winning.

How quickly we forget. Henman was reduced to a quick mention at the end of the programme, but only to record his defeat in the doubles. We can

only hope he does not take Chris Bailey's harsh comment of "He'll have to reassess what he's doing in this game" to heart.

However, he could follow the example of Ian Wright, who is being given the chance to move seamlessly from darling of the North Bank to luvvie of the South Bank. Following an impressive display as a guest on Clive Anderson's show, LWT are letting the Arsenal striker display his own prowess with the mouth in *Friday Night's All Stars* (ITV).

If the pilot is well-received, Wright is reportedly to be commissioned for an entire series, although, if he is to go head to head with Michael Parkinson, the guest list will have to be a little weightier than Lionel Richie and All Saints. A line-

up of, say, Peter Schmeichel, referee David "Little Hitler" Elleray and Leicester's Steve Walsh should ensure bumper viewing figures and a programme to rank alongside such memorable chat-show moments as Russell Harty's handbagging by Grace Jones and Parry's *pas de deux* with Emu.

A less radical career move is being made by Mike Tyson. Kicking his heels while he serves a ban for ear-biting, the former world heavyweight champion is opting not for rugby union, but wrestling.

On the World Wrestling Federation's *Raw* programme (Sky) Tyson - originally billed as a guest referee for an event in March - accepted a challenge from "Stone Cold" Steve Austin to participate more

actively. Tyson accepted Mr Austin's offer with an immense lung-puncturing push to the chest that completely flattened the wrestler.

What the WWF appears - crucially - not to have told Tyson is that it's not real. More ignoble artifice than noble art, in fact. The wrestler's name isn't the way you're supposed to leave him. Pity the man who is given the task of training Tyson for his debut. How do you tell someone who is used to going in for the kill that he only has to pretend to hurt his opponent, that he has to put on an act for the crowd? That he can threaten, but not deliver the telling blow. Who could show Tyson how to overcome an all-consuming desire to win? Somebody send for Henman...

## Chapman in a green and pleasant land

Dominic Chapman, the 20-try Richmond wing, is suddenly the most wanted threequarter in British and Irish rugby. Chris Hewett reports on another surprise promotion for the 21-year-old finisher - his second in the space of a week.

The luck of the Irish? Don't you believe it. No sooner had Brian Ashton, the national coach, hatched a cunning plan to beef up his skeletal threequarter line by luring Dominic Chapman to the green but impoverished pastures of Lansdowne Road than Clive Woodward, his opposite number at well-to-do Twickenham, threw a king-sized spanner in the works.

Woodward yesterday took a fleeting opportunity to coax the Richmond wing away from Ireland by naming him in his 30-man squad for the pre-Five Nations squad session at Bisham Abbey on Wednesday. No one could accuse the England coach of failing to think on his feet; the absence of the six-man Bath contingent from next week's get-together - the West Countrymen have been released to prepare for their Heineken Cup final with Brive - created half a dozen spare places among the international elite.

Woodward has chosen to fill those gaps with in-form outsiders, of whom Chapman is undoubtedly the hottest. The other newcomers include Chris Catling, the fast-maturing

Gloucester full-back, and Dorian West, Leicester's second-string hooker, while the three remaining call-ups - Alex King of Wasps, Phil Greening of Gloucester and Stuart Potter of Leicester - have all been involved at Test squad level at some stage over the past three years or so.

Aware of Chapman's emerald ancestry - born in Kingston-upon-Thames, the former Harlequin's paternal grandparents came from southern Ireland - Ashton made overtures to the player after watching him skin London Irish alive in last weekend's Premiership fixture at Sunbury. However, Woodward appears to have won the day. Senior figures at Richmond were confident yesterday that their colleague would make his intentions clear by pitching up at Bisham rather than in Dublin next week.

One way or another, Richmond's Tetley's Bitter Cup fifth-round tie at Bath this afternoon will be of immense interest to the England selectors. Neither Andy Robinson, the Bath coach, nor John Kingston, his Richmond counterpart, were planning to name their sides until the last possible moment - another surefire indication that the backroom tacticians are suffering from delusions of Alex Ferguson-style grandeur - but with both Chapman and a certain Jeremy Guscott virtually certain to take the field, the match is pregnant with significance.

Bath, the self-styled knock-out kings of England but up against the eight ball for the second successive season, will be

hugely motivated after the fortnight they have just endured. With Kevin Yates still suspended over the Simon Fenn ear-biting scandal and the annual report showing a trading loss of £1.5m for the past financial year, the Recreation Ground will remain a humour-free zone unless and until the players get a decent win under their belts.

"We've been in the news for all the wrong reasons recently, so we have to concentrate on beating Richmond and allowing the good parts of Bath rugby to be talked about again," said Guscott, who will be playing his first game since breaking an arm during the third and final Lions Test in South Africa six months ago. "From a personal point of view, I have to be positive about this tie. Playing in front of the Bath supporters against a multi-talented team like Richmond is as good a return as I could hope for."

Saracens' chances of reversing last month's narrow home defeat by Leicester, their only Premiership loss of the season, were boosted by Richard Hill's successful second-team run-out at Richmond last Wednesday. The England loose forward resumes his potent back-row partnership with Tony Diprose and François Pienaar in what is certain to be a high-class tie, featuring as it does rival World Cup-winning outside-halfers in Michael Lynagh and Joel Stranks.

"Joel is right up there with Hugo Porta and Mark Ella as one of the top three stand-offs I have encountered in my career," said the ever-charitable Lynagh yesterday. It was Stranks' last-ditch drop goal that earned the Tigers their 22-21 Christmas victory at Vicarage Road and Leicester's cup experience and natural resilience, allied to big wins over Coventry and Wasps in the past fortnight, suggest another hard-earned victory on the road.

Lawrence Dallaglio, the Wasps and England captain, sits out tomorrow's tie with Flyde at Loftus Road as a precaution against aggravating his bruised shoulder. Just for once, his majestic presence is unlikely to be missed: the Londoners have Nick Greenstock, their international centre, back in midfield and Andy Gomarsall, the former Test scrum-half, on the bench following back surgery. Besides, Flyde are marooned at the foot of Premiership Two and in no obvious shape to plot an upset.

ENGLAND (Training ground, Bisham Abbey, 20 January): Backs: M. Perry (Bath), D. Preece (Bath), A. Hensley (Leicester), J. Guscott (Bath), W. Greening (Gloucester), P. De Glanville (Bath), M. Catt (Bath), P. Grayson (Northampton), K. Bracken (Saracens), M. Dawson (Northampton), Forwards: J. Leonard (Saracens), K. Yates (Bath), G. Preece (Leicester), D. Clavell (Leicester), R. Cockerill (Leicester), M. Regan (Bath), R. Johnson (Leicester), G. Archer (Hovecastle), D. Greenwood (Saracens), L. Dallaglio (Wasps), T. Redder (Northampton), R. Hall (Saracens), A. Diprose (Saracens), M. Beck (Leicester).

As far as Wainwright is concerned, however, losing would not necessarily be the disaster that some pundits are predicting. "We have said we have to win to set up our season but we have to put it into context," he said. "If we go back two years ago we were in a similar predicament, having drawn with Western Samoa after the World Cup, and things weren't looking quite so good. We went on to have an exceptionally good Five Nations."

## Tondu swap bread for jam

Gordon Pritchard believes today's Swalec Cup fifth-round tie against Premier Division Swansea will provide his Tondu players with an "enjoyable change" from the rigours of the League programme.

"The League is our bread and butter and promotion could benefit this club by between £80,000 and £90,000," said coach Pritchard, who has guided Tondu to second place in the Second Division.

"I would swap a victory over Swansea for League wins over Whitland and Tredegar although, obviously, this match will be a highlight for our players and supporters. It will be an enjoyable change."

Swansea have named a strong side, including the Wales outside half Arwel Thomas, although Scott Gibbs has not fully recovered from a knee injury and sits out the match.

Pontypridd, the only Premier Division club to be drawn at home, will face a Treorchy side

containing six of their former players.

The fly-half Gavin Jones, prop Mark Powell and the flanker Gavin Owen were all Pontypridd regulars, while the prop Kevin Matthews and back-row men Scott Eggar and Barry Jones have also turned out for the Sardis Road club.

Andrew Lewis, in line for a place in the Wales team who face Italy on 7 February, continues his recovery from injury in the Cardiff side at Newbridge, whose lock, Paul Kawulok, has a particular reason to be relishing the encounter.

Kawulok was a member of the Cardiff team who suffered a humiliating Cup defeat by St Peter's on their own Arms Park pitch five years ago.

"Losing to St Peter's was one of the worst experiences of my career," Kawulok, the Newbridge captain, said. "It would be nice to play a part in another Cup upset - this time on the winning side."

## Wainwright welcomes chance of redemption

Rob Wainwright recalls less than fondly Scotland's previous venture on Italian soil, a miserable defeat that the Lions flanker is anxious not to see repeated in *Devosio* today.

The Scottish captain's resolve will be toughened further by the prospect of a Five Nations opener in Ireland in a fortnight's time. Recent record defeats to France, Australia and South Africa raise the stakes higher still. Two years ago, Scotland

sent a near full-strength side to Rieti for what was nominally an A match against Italy, and suffered a 26-17 defeat.

"At that time, I think Scotland underestimated the Italian threat," Wainwright said, "and possibly didn't play with the commitment that was required. The difference this year is that Italy have got a better record than we have. We are under a lot of pressure, having had a difficult start to the season."



Scott Quinnell: 'Of course, I'm committed to Wales. I'm no different to any other Welshman when it comes to the red shirt'

Photograph: Peter Jay

## Quinnell big enough to take the knocks

Depending on your point of view, Scott Quinnell is either the most gifted forward in British rugby or a one-man awkward squad far more trouble than he is worth.

As Richmond prepared to mix it with Bath in this afternoon's big Tetley's Bitter Cup tie at the Recreation Ground, Chris Hewett tracked down an elusive talent and found him full of positive intent.

A great French film director once aimed a sardonic sneer in the direction of his contemporaries across the Channel by dismissing the expression "British movie" as a contradiction in terms. There are those who consider the Scott Quinnell interview to be something very similar and it is undeniably true that the famously taciturn Welshman would much rather play a good game than talk one.

When groin problems forced him to abandon last summer's Lions tour of South Africa, he was on the plane home before the Woodwards and Bernsteins of the rugby press realised he was injured.

"The hardest decision of my life, that was," he says now, sitting bolt upright in the empty bar of the Richmond clubhouse, staring suspiciously at the

notebook before him and looking about as comfortable as a shark in a sand dune. "It was a double hernia, as it turned out. I'd been struggling with it for a while, but I felt fit and strong enough when we first flew down to Jo'burg. I just happened to aggravate it in the game against Northern Transvaal and I knew it would take increasingly long periods of treatment to get me ready for matches. In the end, I felt I wouldn't do justice to myself or the squad by sticking around."

So Quinnell, a stone-cold certainty for the Test No 8 spot, became the Lion Who Never Was. His critics back home in the valleys call him something else: the Welshman Who Never Was. If they go misty-eyed at the mere mention of his rugby ancestry - his father Derek was a three-tour Lion while his uncle, Barry John, remains a 24-carat legend - they soon pursue their lips at Scott's unspeakable defection to rugby league, his equally heinous decision to return to 15-man business with a swanky London outfit like Richmond rather than his Llanelli nursery, his much-publicised contractual squabble with the Welsh Rugby Union.

All of which hurts, though Quinnell is too self-contained a character to show it. What he does display, repeatedly, is a genuine enthusiasm for international rugby, a relish that is about to manifest itself in the annual hothouse of the Five Nations' Championship. "Of

course, I'm committed to Wales," he says. "I don't play for anyone unless I'm committed. I'm not the sort to turn up out of habit or because there's nothing better to do. Apart from injury, nothing has kept me out of a Welsh squad since Christmas '96. I'm in the present squad and I badly want to play in what I believe has the makings of a very strong team. I'm no different to any other Welshman when it comes to the red shirt. No different at all."

It is startling to think that Quinnell, 25 last August, has yet to reach the midway point of his career. His name, made famous by the family flesh and blood that went before him, was being bandied around the west Wales grapevine before he started shaving and he climbed the rungs of the representative ladder as to the manner born. He made his Test debut against Canada in 1993 as a blind-side flanker before lording it over the rest of Europe with some thunderous displays at No 8 as Wales won the 1994 Five Nations.

He had the world at his feet. Unfortunately for an adoring Welsh public, that world was an amateur one. Rugby's big bucks were then confined to league and when Quinnell signed for Wigan, the sound of a thousand camera shutters snapping in unison was drowned out by the wailing and gnashing of teeth back home. When the bucks transferred themselves to south-west London, he resurfaced at

the Richmond Athletic Ground. Does that make him a rugby mercenary, a bounty-hunting slave to his own bank account?

"It's a professional game and players make the best living they can," he says with unarguable logic. "I felt it was better for me and my rugby to get out of Wales, even though it's my home and there is nothing I enjoy more than going back over the bridge and spending time with the boys in the squad. To be honest with you, I found London difficult to come to terms with at first, but the simple fact is that there is now a huge difference between the club games in the two countries."

"In Wales you can still rest players and beat the weaker sides by 50 points. You simply cannot do that in the English Premiership, where the week-in, week-out matches are so much harder. There is no such thing as an easy 80 minutes here and if you look at what is happening at Richmond, it's making better players of us all."

"I do worry, though, about the club game back home. You can't stop people making their livelihoods and you might argue that the English-based players will strengthen the Welsh international side by bringing in new ideas. But if all the top players head for England - and if Neil Jenkins decides to join Bath, for instance, a lot of the big names could well follow him over the bridge - it will do nothing for the game domestically."

If we're not careful, we'll lose the most important thing, the fan base. If the crowds start turning to other things, we're lost.

"It's a problem for the Welsh Rugby Union to sort out. I'm contracted to Richmond until 2002 and, as we speak, I can't see myself playing club rugby for a Welsh team again. But something has to be done to give the players who are there some real opportunities."

Richmond has been good for Quinnell and judging by the way he is performing at present, the benefits are mutual. The Londoners started their Premiership campaign with a limited bish-bosh game plan depressingly reminiscent of league and the wisecrackers wondered whether it had been worth Quinnell's while leaving Wigan, but Ben Clarke's expensive recruited outfit have added a harp-full of strings to their bow and are now playing with pace and style.

There's bags of potential here and when we learn to win games while playing below our capacity, we'll be right up there with the big boys," Quinnell says. Talking of which, his out-sized brother, Craig, is also cutting mustard by the jar-load at the Athletic Ground these days. "He's bloody huge, isn't he?" Scott laughs. "I'm glad he's on my side." And you realise that if both exiled siblings are going to wrap themselves in the Welsh flag over the next couple of months, it will have to be a very large flag indeed.







## Jackson central to Town redevelopment

Huddersfield Town strayed from the norm when they appointed their manager, and so far have been rewarded for their enterprise.

Guy Hodgson talked to Peter Jackson as he prepared for today's FA Cup fourth-round tie against Wimbledon.

It does not take a rocket scientist to work out the commodity Peter Jackson trades in. Behind the desk in his office at the McAlpine Stadium is a glass case in which the colours of Huddersfield Town are displayed. "Be proud and honoured to wear this shirt," the caption reads.

It is what Jackson, who installed this motivational tool, believes made him. Commitment, an anxiety to be seen to be working hard, call it what you will, it got him to be captain of the club and, subsequently, made him an unusual choice as manager. When the Huddersfield players take the field against Wimbledon today, the one mistake which will not be tolerated is not caring.

The usual suspects surfaced as potential replacements for the sacked Brian Horton last October. Joe Royle and Bruce Rioch among them, but Huddersfield resisted their lure and that of fading ex-internationals to go for a 36-year-old former player who was seeing out his career and mints days at Halifax Town looking for a job. Anything would do as long as it was in football.

If "who?" was the immediate response from outside Yorkshire, then "why?" followed immediately afterwards. The impressive McAlpine Stadium in the hands of someone who had never been a manager before? Well, it's a disappointment waiting to happen, isn't it?

Some calamity. Since Jackson arrived bringing the sages Terry Yorath and Terry Dolan with him, Huddersfield have stopped being the coconuts of the First Division shy who were rock bottom with no wins and just four points. Nine games in which only two defeats have been suffered have taken them to the relative respectability of 19th place and offered them an opportunity for Cup renown against Wimbledon.

"If you looked at the league table you couldn't take a bet on us getting relegated," Jackson said describing the situation that greeted him. "The players didn't enjoy training, they didn't enjoy matches and there



was no real team spirit. We were getting beaten too easily. That's what we've turned round.

"It's such a famous old shirt, blue and white stripes, and when I was captain I used to look forward to putting it on. That's what I wanted to install in the players. What the fans want to see is pride and passion. We won't win every game but we'll give it a go."

The last sentence could sum up Jackson the player. He was a whole-hearted defender, the sort of player whom peers looked to for leadership natu-

rally and who became a pillar beyond the confines of Bradford City after the fire that killed 52 people in May 1985. As captain, he organised hospital visits and fund-raising for the victims, taking the players out into a shocked community.

"I've been asked a 100 times to go through that day but I don't really like to talk about it, it is too horrendous to describe," he said. "It took years and years to get over, if indeed I have. I still think about it now, the memories are clear as they were the day it happened."

"We thought it hadn't affected my younger daughter, Charlotte, who was 18 months old at the time. Then some time later she drew a picture of her dad at work, playing football. The stand she drew had flames coming from it. It was on fire."

The club's promotion from the old Third Division that season was an irrelevance in the face of tragedy, but football helped Bradford move on and, in turn, it elevated Jackson, who joined Newcastle United in the First Division the following year.

It is, he says, the best trophy he ever won when he was awarded player of the season by supporters ahead of two players who have since passed out of the memory. Oh, go on, you might have heard of them: Paul Gascoigne and Peter Beardsley.

It was also at St James' Park that Jackson came closest to the game's highest honours, a fifth-round FA Cup tie against today's opponents. "It was the year they won it, 1988, and I honestly feel we'd beaten them that day we'd have got to the final. We were playing ever so well. It was a full house and maybe the occasion got too much for us. We were out-fought basically, we didn't give them a game that day. You



Dynamic duo: Peter Jackson (left) and Terry Yorath have overseen a Huddersfield revival

Photograph: Empics

could say I owe Wimbledon one."

From Newcastle Jackson returned to Bradford for £300,000 - "a mistake, I'm remembered now for my two bad years at the end rather than the eight good ones in my first spell" - and then was given a free transfer to Huddersfield. Like a house buyer finding the perfect home, something clicked.

"As soon as I came to the old stadium and walked through the

doors I felt as though it was my club," Jackson said. "I don't know what it was but I thought: 'This is for me'. My form picked up and I went from strength to strength. From that day to this I've had a wonderful relationship with the staff, the fans, everybody."

The Huddersfield board remembered that as Horton was on his way out, and called Jackson for a Sunday morning meeting. "I had all the emotions. I

was playing for Halifax against Kettering on the Saturday and how I got through that game I'll never know because my mind was going. 'What questions are they going to ask, what am I going to say?'"

He must have come up with some good answers because Jackson was appointed almost immediately. "Some ex-internationals or managers with 20 years experience don't get interviews for a job like this.

never mind get appointed, so for a person who is not really known outside Yorkshire it was fantastic. The club have gambled on me."

So far - with Yorath and Dolan to guide him - so good and a cup run would be an embellishment to a promising start in management. Huddersfield could have lost their shirts when they bet on Jackson, instead they have had one framed.

## Jungle alert for missing Kommissar

News item  
Barry Gaffer, Sludgethorpe Brazil's self-styled Football Kommissar, is missing, feared dead, in the jungles of Central America.

Sir Hiram Firem, the club chairman, last night admitted the club were "very concerned" about the fate of their manager. The 54-year-old Gaffer has not been in touch with the club since he flew to Central America in an attempt to solve Brazil's striker crisis by signing charismatic striker Che Revolta.

Revolta, who plays for Cicasparat Juniors deep in the area's troubled region, is seen as the right man to replace the former hard-man Brian Heckinbottom, who has gone soft since he went AWOL in the Indian hippy beach resort of Goa.

Revolta, who has shot two referees, three opponents and four taxi drivers in his controversial career, scored his third hat-trick



## THE GAFFER TAPES

of the season at the weekend.

It is thought Gaffer, who has been unable to lift Brazil from the bottom of the Premiership since replacing former manager Big Mick Sheepskin in September, was at the match but has not been seen since leaving the ground in the boot of a large car driven by three men with dark glasses and ponchos.

Gaffer is known as one of the game's survivors having been sacked at every level, but this could be one gamble too far.

In another development, Heckinbottom announced he is to become a candidate for the Natural Law Party in the European elections. Among his more unusual proposals is that goals are to be banned in football matches as the concepts of winning and losing promote ill-feeling between men.

With Broccoli Moore still in jail after assaulting a police officer's house with a Christmas Tree, Heckinbottom has been replaced in today's side by Herman Mann. The 17-year-old is the son of assistant manager Kit Mann who has taken over running Sludgethorpe in Gaffer's absence. Ivor Niggle (bunions) and Shaun Prone (headache) are out.

Sludgethorpe Brazil: Parker, Blow, Phoebe, Off, Gaffer, Rhona, Spice, Smith, Massimo, Mann, Unstated.

## MAJOR WEEKEND FIXTURES AND POOLS CHECK

TODAY	
3.0 unless stated	
FA Cup fourth round	
1. Birmingham v Southampton	
2. Huddersfield v Wimbledon	
3. Cardiff v Reading	
4. Crystal Palace v Luton	
5. Tottenham v Sheffield	
6. Leeds v Gillingham	
7. Manchester United v Watford	
8. Aston Villa v West Bromwich Albion	
9. Middlesbrough v Arsenal	
10. Tottenham v Barnsley	
11. Coventry v Derby	
12. Ipswich v Sheffield United	
Nationwide Football League	
First Division	
1. Bradford City v Swindon	
2. Oxford United v Portsmouth	
3. Port Vale v Crewe	
4. QPR v Nottingham Forest	
Second Division	
1. Barnsley v Oldham	
2. Brentford v Watford	
3. Bristol City v Northampton	
4. Burnley v Southend	
5. Cardiff v Bristol Rovers	
6. Luton v Fulham	
7. Plymouth v Wigan	
8. Sutton United v Chesterfield	
9. Walsley v Blackpool	
10. York v Millwall	
Third Division	
1. Barnet v Colchester	
2. Brighton v Scarbrough	
3. Cambridge United v Chester	
4. Darlington v Exeter	
5. Doncaster v Macclesfield	
6. Hartlepool v Rotherham	
7. Hull v Peterborough	
8. Lincoln City v Notts County	
9. Rochdale v Leyton Orient	
10. Southport v Swindon	
11. Torquay v Shrewsbury	
GM Vauxhall Conference	
1. Dover v Rushmore	
2. Grays v Hemel Hempstead	
3. Hemel Hempstead v Hayes	
4. Kidlington v Farnborough	
5. Kidlington v Monks Cleeve	
6. Leek v Stalybridge	
7. Northwich v Chatham	
8. Southport v Welling	
Ryman League	
Premier Division	
1. Aylesbury v Carleton	
2. Barnham Wood v Bishop Cleeve	
3. Chesham v Haydock	
4. Dagenham v Redbridge	
5. Dulwich v Purfleet	
6. Hendon v Grays	
7. Kingston v Basingstoke	
8. Oxford City v Bromley	
9. Sutton United v St Albans	
10. Walton & Hersham v Havant	
11. Yeading v Gravesend	
UniBond League	
Premier Division	
1. Bishop Auckland v Marine	
2. Blyth Spartans v Humber	
3. Chorley v Boston Utd	
4. Colwyn Bay v Leigh RMI	
5. Enfield v Walsall	
Tennents Scottish Cup	
Third round	
1. Alloa v Forth	
2. Celtic v Morton	
3. Dundee v Aberdeen	
4. Dundee v Edinburgh City	
5. Hibernian v Rangers	
6. Inverness Caledonian Thistle v Aberdeen	
7. Livingston v Albion Rovers	
8. Queen of the South v Stirling	
9. St Johnstone v Dundee	
10. Stirling Albion v Falkirk	
11. Stranraer v Nairn	
TOMORROW	
FA Cup fourth round	
1. Manchester City v West Ham	
2. Stevenage v Newcastle United	
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1. Dundee v St Mirren	

## SPORT ON THE INTERNET

### Scandinavian Saddlers may miss Walsall's finest hour

Perhaps one should not be surprised that even the smaller football clubs have their own web sites, but most of GM Vauxhall Conference sides have either an official or unofficial site.

Stevenage Borough, the last non-League side left in the FA Cup, have a very good site with the usual mix of results, match reports, news, history, player info and merchandising.

For the braver among you, there is the chance to sample Boro's FA Cup song via the web site. Also, pictures are promised of their new away stand "which is coming on nicely" and this may come as a slight reassurance for all

those Geordies streaming down from the north-east for tomorrow's match.

Cardiff City are the only Third Division side left in the competition and, of their two main web sites, the unofficial one is much the better. Yesterday both of them led with the surprising news that Cardiff had sacked their manager Russell Osman the day before one of their most important matches for years and the official site managed to spell the new manager's first name wrong.

Spelling is not the strongest suit on the internet, but getting Osman's name wrong does rather add insult to injury. There are two clubs from

the Second Division, Walsall and Grimsby, both of whom are playing Premier League opposition, Manchester United and Leeds respectively.

Maybe it is because Walsall now have a Danish manager, but the best unofficial site is in Sweden. Why Walsall in particular should have such a Scandinavian following beats me. What is more understandable is that Grimsby have a Norwegian web site, but you have to be fluent in Norwegian to understand it.

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Cardiff City unofficial site  
<http://tds.dial.pipex.com/m/morms/ccat.htm>  
Walsall unofficial site  
<http://www2.pasagen.se/hjw/jul/index.htm>  
Grimsby Town unofficial site  
<http://www.grimstam.demon.co.uk/gtfc/>  
Grimsby Town unofficial site (in Norwegian)  
<http://www.marine.no/~svener/grimsby.html>

in the third round of the Cup in 1975 does not get a mention. I'm sure that there are thousands of Saddlers' fans in Scandinavia and elsewhere praying for a repeat today.

— Edward Abelson

## WEEKEND FIXTURE GUIDE

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Cardiff City unofficial site  
<http://tds.dial.pipex.com/m/morms/ccat.htm>  
Walsall unofficial site  
<http://www2.pasagen.se/hjw/jul/index.htm>  
Grimsby Town unofficial site  
<http://www.grimstam.demon.co.uk/gtfc/>  
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## SNOW REPORT

### AROUND THE RESORTS

Resort	Comment
<b>ANDORRA</b>	
Grandval	Good skiing at all levels
<b>AUSTRIA</b>	
Ischgl	Great, improved at all levels
<b>BULGARIA</b>	
Pangloss	Fresh snow at top
<b>CANADA</b>	
Whistler	Mostly packed powder snow
<b>FRANCE</b>	
Val Thorens	Light to fresh snow
<b>ITALY</b>	
Corviglia	Good snow on all levels
<b>NORWAY</b>	
Hemmel	Fresh snow on all levels
<b>ROMANIA</b>	
St. Ili	Fresh snow on all runs
<b>SPAIN</b>	
Val de Navia	Best in Europe at Berroqueles
<b>SWEDEN</b>	
St. Ili	Firm packed snow
<b>SWITZERLAND</b>	
Verbier	Fresh snow at all levels
<b>UNITED STATES</b>	
Northstar Park	Fish powder on firm base



## Gallagher hopes the roof will fall in on rich and famous



### FA CUP COUNTDOWN

Stevenage Borough's veteran goalkeeper, Des Gallagher, has enjoyed a colourful career – he was once apprehended dribbling down the wing naked. Tomorrow he faces Newcastle United – and perhaps Alan Shearer. Mike Rowbottom reports.

Freshly showered after their midweek victory over Hereford United, the players and staff of Stevenage Borough decamped to the clubhouse for their customary post-match meal and drink.

As the men who have taken this GM Vauxhall Conference side to the FA Cup fourth round for the first time in the club's history tucked into their spaghetti bolognese and sipped cautiously at their lager, the television in the corner burst into aggressive promotional mode.

It was Sky TV, trumpeting tomorrow's live broadcast of "the big one" – Stevenage versus Newcastle United. A roar – part recognition, part celebration, part disbelief – went through the clubhouse. And now the highlights were running of Newcastle's victory at Derby, inspired by the return of the man whom the England manager, Glenn Hoddle, has identified as his most important player in this summer's World Cup challenge, Alan Shearer. "He's back," the commentator bellowed.

Looking up from his spaghetti, the footballer to whom this news was perhaps more immediately relevant than any other – Stevenage's goalkeeper, Des Gallagher – raised his eyebrows momentarily before restoring his attention to the plate in front of him.

"When the draw was made, I didn't expect him to be back because of his injury," Gallagher said. "But when they brought him on against Derby, I suddenly thought: 'Crikey. You are going to play against Alan Shearer.'"

"It's in the back of my mind all the time. In years to come, it would be nice to say that I've done that. Obviously, if he does play, it will make things hard for us – but we'll put 'Smudger' on him."

Smudger, alias the Stevenage centre-back Mark Smith, is a highly effective operator whose efforts were instrumental in achieving the victories over Cambridge United and then Swindon Town in the two previous rounds. Whether he will be able to quell the England centre-forward if Kenny Dalglish decides to risk him in the charged atmosphere of Stevenage's Broadhall Way ground remains to be seen.

Gallagher ruefully acknowledged that he was likely to be significantly more busy tomorrow than on the freezing evening of Hereford's visit. Stevenage, the sole non-League survivors in the competition, are not entitled to hold out any realistic hope

of progressing to the fifth round – but there was a piquant coincidence in the fact that their last match before "the big one" should have been against the side that so famously dumped Newcastle out of the FA Cup in 1972.

"The manager will have us all in a positive frame of mind," said Gallagher, who was chosen for England's semi-professional international with the Netherlands two seasons ago.

"We don't want them to score an early goal to get on top, but the longer the game goes on we are convinced we can sneak a goal. Anything can happen and we are quietly confident."

Regardless of tomorrow's result, the occasion will rank as the highlight of this affable keeper's career. At 35, Gallagher is the senior pro-

fessional at Stevenage, having played more than 300 games for a club with whom he has been for 14 of the last 18 years.

Rejected by Watford, where he played briefly as a schoolboy alongside Kenny Jackett, Steve Terry and Nigel Callaghan, he arrived at Broadhall Way in 1985 after a number of seasons spent in the South Midlands League with teams near his home in Luton.

At that time Stevenage were down in the Isthmian League Second Division and just starting a phenomenal rise through the ranks which has been guided in recent years by the current manager, Paul Fairclough. The interlude in Gallagher's Stevenage career came between 1988 and 1992, when he turned out for Dunstable Town and also spent

one season playing in Perth, Australia. He earned a name for himself as a penalty-taker at Dunstable, making the headlines in a match against Erith when he scored twice from the spot and saved a penalty himself. That season he finished as joint top scorer with eight goals.

Outfield activity of a more ambitious nature had earned him another little place in non-League history during the 1987-88 season when he received an eight-match ban for bringing the game into disrepute after streaking while watching a Bank Holiday match.

"I'd been on the drink," said Gallagher with disarming directness. "Stevenage didn't have a game so I watched Vauxhall against Clacton in the Isthmian League because some of my mates were playing."

"There was a bit of banter and some of the lads I was with dared me to do a streak. So I ran on and started kicking the ball and all the players just collapsed laughing."

The naked custodian was eventually apprehended while dribbling down the wing – one of the club's chairmen had to drag him from the field of play. "It didn't go down too well with my manager at the time," Gallagher said, with a grin. "But I've mellowed with age. I still like a night out with the lads, but I'm a family man now."

His wife, Denise, and sons Calum and Reuben, will be present tomorrow in a crowd expected to number more than 8,000 thanks to the additional seating which has been specially constructed behind one end of the ground. Gallagher's brother,

Sean, an actor who has made regular TV appearances in *EastEnders* and *The Bill*, is also hoping to watch.

Gallagher readily admits that he, and most of his team-mates, would have preferred to play the tie at St James' Park. "The nearest I have been to the ground was seeing it from the train when we go up to play Gateshead," he said. "It looked pretty awesome." A week today the Stevenage players will have another tantalising railway glimpse of Newcastle's stadium, when they play Gateshead in the FA Trophy.

The hasty construction of extra seating at Broadhall Way has attracted more than a passing interest from Gallagher, who was a scaffolder for many years before taking up his present full-time job as a surveyor for a roof insulation company.

When work began during last Saturday's home match against Halifax, Gallagher was unable to resist using quiet moments to cast a professional eye over the progress of the project going on behind his goal on what one local wit has termed the Delphish Stand.

En route for the clubhouse meal in midweek, he paused in front of the half finished infrastructure and gave his cautious approval. "It looks like it should be done in time," he said. "There'll probably be a penalty clause if it's not."

Gallagher's FA Cup preparation will involve measuring cavity walls in a series of north London lofts – he is working until Saturday. But, busy as he is, there is still plenty of time for him to be pestered for tickets – on Monday night, he and the other Stevenage players scuttled out of the changing-room like thieves clutching booty after receiving their allocations.

Gallagher has even been pressed for tickets by parents at the school where he drops off his children in the mornings. It makes the FA Cup run of last year, which ended with a 2-0 defeat at Birmingham City, appear relatively low-key. "Birmingham just felt like a day out, but the hype and attention for this match is amazing," he said.

The news has long since carried to Gallagher's friends back in Australia via screenings of BBC TV's *Match of the Day*. "One rang up and told me he had seen something on television about Stevenage playing Newcastle United in the FA Cup, and he said: 'That's not the real FA Cup, is it?' I thought it might be another cup? So I told him: 'There's only one FA Cup.'"

True – and, just for the moment at least, its spirit lives on in Stevenage.

## More emotion does not necessarily mean less authority

Never mind David Mellor and his contentious comments about Chris Kamara's sacking, what about the remarks made this week by one of Mellor's BBC colleagues, Zoe Ball?

Radio One's Breakfast Show presenter, a Manchester United fan for all of about five years (ie since their domination began), introduced her *Dream Team* on Radio Five Live on Monday, among them the "scrummy" David Beckham and the "mean and moody" Roy Keane who, apparently, "has all the assets of a real footballer". She did not seem to be referring to Keane's box-to-box engine and passing skills.

Just a bit of fun, no doubt, but it still did women in football a huge disservice. We've climbed the proverbial mountain to get where we are today – on a par, for the most part with our male contemporaries – and 30 minutes worth of Ball's flippancies lowered our stock considerably.

Sure, women tend to have a more emotional perspective on the game, but more emotion does not necessarily mean less authority. I hope I am viewed as a football journalist who just happens to be a woman rather than a woman football journalist. Believe me, there is a big difference.

However, the one aspect of the game in which women will never be the equal of men is on the pitch. But it is in being compared to the men's game that women's football has suffered. As Pete Davies, the author of *I Lost My Heart to the Belles*, says: "You wouldn't expect a woman cricketer to bowl as fast as Courtney Walsh or Sally Gunnell to race Linford Christie, so why expect the Doncaster Belles to be of comparable standard to Doncaster Rovers?" Until we start coming from that standpoint, the woman's game will not get the respect it deserves.

Davies has done more than most to promote women's football in this country, but the Football Association has also played a part, assuming responsibility for the women's game from the WFA in 1993. And while the nation might not be aware of it, engulfed as it is in all things appertaining to *France 98*, women's football is having something of a purple patch. There are now 600 women's teams in the UK and at least 750 girls' teams, as compared to 263 in 1989. In fact, the growth has been such that the current set-up needs restructuring.

Fifa, meanwhile, estimates the number of women playing



OLIVIA BLAIR

### ON PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY WOMEN ON AND OFF THE PITCH

football worldwide at around 30 million, while almost six million tuned into the 1995 World Cup final in Sweden between Germany and Norway. The 1996 Olympic Games final, in which the US beat China 2-1, attracted a crowd of 76,000.

Davies accepts the growth in the number of participants, and in the extent of the coverage, but maintains that the standard of women's football in the UK has hardly changed in a decade. Which might be why the FA hosted a pow-wow this week at Lancaster Gate for the major players in the

women's game aimed, among other things, at "identifying and developing talented female players from an early age" through better training, better support networks (rehabilitation, nutrition and diet) and better funding. They want women's football to become the UK's major female sport.

The Lottery Sports Fund will have a big say in whether they achieve that aim, but it is attitude as much as money that is the issue here. Germany's women footballers train four nights a week and the game gains extensive coverage; ditto Scandinavia. In the US, around nine million women play football, while Japan will support a professional women's league next year.

Consequently, their players are fitter and more athletic than ours, who lack the opportunities to hone their skills from an early age.

But the goalposts are shifting. I played football at school in the days when a girl playing football was "just not on". I had to play in the boys' under-11 team and was allocated a separate changing-room for away matches. (My career reached an abrupt end when I broke the captain of the school's ankle with a terrible tackle). These days, however,

it is common to see both boys and girls playing football together at school.

So while next year's women's World Cup in America might come too soon as far as the British game is concerned (England are vying to qualify with world champions Norway, Germany and the Netherlands; their next match is against Germany at the New Den on 8 March), by the time the next World Cup arrives, it might, as they say, be a different ball game all together.

Part of the problem has also been that our culture does not support a dedicated national women's sport. Netball comes closest, but with all due respect it hardly stiffens the sinews (my knowledge extends to the fact that England star Gill Neville is Gary and Phil's sister, and that we always get beaten by the Aussies).

Perhaps if women's football was allowed to stand on its own two feet rather than constantly having to match – and, by definition, failing to do so – the standard set by the men's game, it might assume that role. Granted, it has some similarities with the men's game – Arsenal and Liverpool are among its top six clubs – but very few in reality. Everton are top of the Premier League, for a start.

## No more jokes if United move to Wembley

OK, so we've all heard the jokes: what do you buy a Man United fan for Christmas? A road map of Manchester. I was recently discussing this attitude towards United fans with an American friend and he was surprised by the idea that you had to have a direct connection with the location of the team you support.

In the States, it is far less common, for historical reasons which began with baseball. Until the 1960s, baseball was the king of American professional sports. Basketball and American football existed but did not achieve prominence until widespread television coverage.

Before the Second World War, nearly all the main sports teams were based in the East since that was where most of the population lived. But after the war, widespread use of the car led to a shift of populations away from the cities and into the suburbs. The population also began a westward migration towards California and later the south west, to places such as New Mexico and Arizona.

In the meantime, the West Coast was booming and wanted major league sport quickly and off the shelf. The great change began with the Brooklyn Dodgers. The Dodgers, originally called

the Trolley Dodgers, were in Brooklyn, where the population was beginning to migrate to the suburbs.

Los Angeles dangled a good offer in front of Dodgers' owner, Walter O'Malley, and he moved the team lock, stock and barrel to a brand new stadium provided by the citizens of Los Angeles.

The Dodgers' move opened the floodgates. During the 1950s, the Giants moved from New York to San Francisco, the Braves from

and perhaps the most bizarre of all, the Utah Jazz (retained from New Orleans).

Today, the transplanting of sports franchises especially in American football has become an epidemic. And so, the Baltimore Colts upped and went to Indianapolis, the St Louis Cardinals left for Arizona. Both Los Angeles teams are now gone, the Raiders moving back to Oakland where they had moved from just a few years before, and the LA Rams relocated to St Louis. It all makes Wembley's proposed move to Dublin look tame.

Alex Ferguson said recently his ultimate dream is an 80,000 capacity ground which he is convinced would be filled at home games. The same thought has occurred to Arsenal who have the idea of moving to Wembley.

But one problem is that Arsenal would never be able to fill it, while United could. And given the experience of the United States, it would not be quite so fantastical for a new London mayor to push for United to move into this new home in north-west London.

Obviously, it would be renamed New Trafford. One thing's for certain – if United were based at Wembley, the fans wouldn't need a road map!

FAN'S EYE  
VIEW  
NO 241  
NEW TRAFFORD  
BY  
BOB CHAUNDY

Boston to Milwaukee (then to Atlanta in the 1960s), the Athletics from Philadelphia to Kansas City. In addition, the Lakers (basketball) moved from Minnesota to Los Angeles, as did the Philadelphia Warriors to San Francisco.

The retention of the original team names led to the anomalous Los Angeles Dodgers (not a trolley in sight), the Los Angeles Lakers (retained from Minnesota, land of a thousand lakes),



Crystal Palace's tussle with Leicester raises the possibility of Tomas Broin being shadowed by his fellow Swede, Pontus Kamark, while Barnsley return to Tottenham barely a month since succumbing 3-0 there. It looks like full steam ahead for Spurs, although there may be a happy omen for Barnsley in the opening of a certain film. The last time the Titanic was launched, in 1912, they won the Cup.

Middlesbrough manager Bryan Robson only has one major injury problem with Republic of Ireland international full back Curtis Fleming definitely out following an appendicectomy operation. Robson's side may feature up to five teenagers. England Under-18 internationals Anthony Comerod and Andy Campbell, along with youngsters Craig Harrison, Steve Balcer and Mark Summerbell may all feature as more senior players are rested for League games. Robson said: "The kids have not let me down this season. Promotion is our top priority and the next League match at St.oke City is more important than the cup ties." Arsenal captain Tony Adams returns to replace the injured Martin Keown, who is joined on the sidelines by David Seaman and Ian Wright. Alex Manninger will deputise for Seaman and Nicolas Anelka for Wright, but Mark Overmars (hamstring) is set to return and midfielder David Platt (groin) is still ruled out.

Newcastle manager Kenny Dalglish is waiting until tomorrow to decide if the England captain, Alan Shearer, will play, while the Belgian defender Philippe Albert has recovered from a hamstring strain. Midfielder David Batty has completed a four-match ban but centre-half Darren Peacock must serve the second game of a two-match suspension.



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# YOUR MONEY

PERSONAL FINANCE, PROPERTY & MOTORING

Saturday 24 January 1998



Liquid assets: Wine can be bought and sold in bond to avoid payment of excise duty and, because it is seen as a commodity, any appreciation in price avoids capital tax liabilities

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

## Develop a nose for some vintage investments

The case for laying down wine has become stronger as prices have soared, with the value of certain Bordeaux rising over 400 per cent this decade.

But prices can be volatile, and returning from Calais with a car full of bottles won't turn you into a millionaire. James Moore offers some advice to prevent any vintage portfolio going sour.

Serious wine drinkers have been crying into their glasses and looking mournfully at their wallets. Because, like it or not, their favourite tipples has become one of the hottest investment commodities around.

Some of the gains in price of the top Bordeaux Chateaux make even the FTSE 100's brightest stars look dim by comparison.

If you had bought a 12 bottle case of Chateau Latour 1990 from wine brokers Farr Vintners in August 1991, for example, you would have paid £376. The same case in August 1997 would have cost £2,000 from the

same merchant, an increase of 432 per cent.

Gains of 300 and 400 per cent over the same period are common for the top 10 investment wines from Bordeaux, such as Chateau Latour, Lafite, Margaux, Mouton-Rothschild and Petrus from top-rated vintages. Returns at auctions have been even more spectacular.

In recent years the price of fine red Bordeaux, where the majority of "investment" wines are made, has shot up. Other investment wines, such as vintage Port, fine red and white Burgundies, Sauternes and one or two top names from the New World, have also seen impressive price rises following their release on to the market.

Aside from the potential returns, one of the advantages of investing in wine is that it can be bought and sold in bond to avoid payment of excise duty and, because it is seen as a commodity and buying is a commercial transaction, any appreciation in price avoids liability to capital gains tax.

This has not gone unnoticed by the professional money men and some have gone so far as to set up firms with the accent on selling wines on

the back of their investment potential as much as their drinking quality.

Gary Boom, a former currency broker, is now chairman of wine broker Bordeaux Index. He says: "Taking the compounded returns each year since 1978, the Dow Jones Index would give you 14 per cent, the FTSE 100, 12 per cent but the Decanter magazine index of auction prices of the top 59 Bordeaux wines would give you around 17 per cent."

He thinks prices will continue to rise and the opening up of new markets for the best wines will add fuel to the fire.

"I'm very bullish about prospects. I still believe that fine wine is under-priced. Say wine catches on in China, the top producers can't increase production and every time a bottle is drunk that is one less on the market. It also has an archaic system of pricing and distribution - when that gets sorted out prices will rise."

The independent financial advisers, Quest Bureau Financial Planning, set up a sister company, Quest Fine Wine Investments, to cater for investors willing to sink serious money into a bit of what they fancy.

Marjorie Henry, the company's

marketing director, says: "Our interest in fine wines came from experience of clients with portfolios of fine wine."

"The people who are approaching us are looking to have wine as part of a portfolio. It is a good long-term investment." This led to the launch of the new company in 1995, followed by the launch of an internet service at the end of last year.

She says the company is run on the principles of best advice like Quest Bureau Financial Planning, though the wine broker is not regulated by the Personal Investment Authority because the sale of wine is a commercial transaction and outside the scope of the Financial Services Act, which covers most investment products.

But there are pitfalls. As with any investment, the price of wine can fall as well as rise, and there can be considerable volatility in price.

Buyers should also take care to get a certificate of ownership and to ensure that each individual case bought is marked with their name and details.

If this is not done, in the event that the company from which the wine was purchased collapses, it can be diffi-

cult to establish ownership. Thousands of pounds could be lost.

It also pays to ensure the wine is stored correctly, in a dark cellar at a constant cool temperature, and to take advice.

Gaylene Thompson, a wine trader at Farr Vintners, says: "When you look at the numbers it is hard to argue but I would advise caution."

"You have to realise that the price of wine can go down as well as up. You have to stick to the blue chip wines from good vintages and know what you are doing - after all, I certainly wouldn't start investing in shares without any knowledge."

Simon Woods, editor of *Which?* *Wine Guide*, says the really spectacular gains have come to an end for the present.

"The rushes of blood are now finished and things have got more sensible, prices have stabilised," Mr Woods says. "The gains are likely to be more long term now."

The boom has been fuelled by increasing interest in fine wines from the newly enriched in the "tiger economies" of south-east Asia, where recent events will have priced buyers out of the market for a while.

But there are still good reasons

why prices will rise rather than fall.

There was a run of poor vintages in the early 1990s in Bordeaux. Stocks of the great vintages from the 1980s, such as 1982, 1985, 1986, 1988, 1989 and 1990, are now thin on the ground and new vintages such as 1995 and 1996 have been released at ever higher prices.

The wine producers are also waking up to the money being made from their products and have increased prices at release accordingly.

Mr Boom says in the long run he is optimistic that the prices of top wines will continue to surge forward in price.

He adds: "If you get a portfolio of the top wines you will do very well. Even if the price does go down you can always drink it. You couldn't do that with a share."

As for wine drinkers, some of them have been catching on. Ms Henry says: "A lot of people are looking to build up their cellars; their interest is in wine for drinking." These people buy more than they need and sell the excess to fund their purchases. "This means it is possible to get their wines for drinking for free so they can drink the very best."

### INSIDE

BOON WINDSOR  
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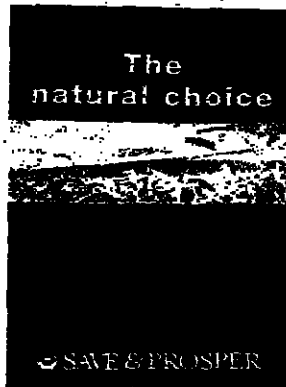
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## Threshold test for New Labour

CLIFFORD  
GERMAN

Affluence testing is the latest example of New Labour-speak to edge its way into the lexicon, but if there is meant to be any difference between affluence testing in the 21st century and the means testing which left such deep scars in the consciousness of the working class in the inter-war years, it has yet to emerge.

If affluence testing means anything different it should signify that the threshold will apply at a higher level and impact on people who consider themselves middle rather than working class. But given the progressive inflation of language since the Thirties, it seems reasonable to assume that affluence and means testing are really the same thing.

The means test was introduced by the National Government in 1931 to decide whether families who were no longer eligible for unemployment benefit could claim additional benefits from public funds. As *Brewer's Encyclopedia* says, "the resulting indignity was much resented [because] it took account of any earnings by members of the household and all monetary assets and penalised the provident".

Means testing was abolished after the Second World War and successive governments have stuck to the principle that if they are old, out of work, have children or are disabled, the well-off are just as entitled to benefits as the poor, and everyone is spared the indignity of having their personal finances subjected to public scrutiny.

Half a century later, however, means testing is seeking to return as a way of reducing the soaring cost of welfare spending. How much easier it would be, the argument runs, to channel benefits to where they are most needed by the really poor if better-off people were not automatically eligible to claim them.

It is an insidious argument but the disadvantages are as great now as they were in the Thirties. The higher the starting point for withholding benefits, the less money would be saved but the lower the threshold, the more thrifty people who had built up savings and income from interest and dividends would be penalised.

The really rich might not really suffer if the state pension was withheld from everyone with assets of half a million and an income of £50,000. But where should the line be drawn, and should it be a hard and fast line or a graduated scale, paying full benefits to the really poor, nothing to the really rich and clawing back part of payment to the vast majority of middle-income earners? That would be the best way of ensuring the resentment of the maximum number of people.

Means testing has already made a comeback in assessing the eligibility of old people to have their long-term care bills paid, and it has not proved popular or fair. It is unlikely to win many friends if it is applied more widely.

## MONEY MAKEOVER

# Plan to retire with an easy conscience

Name: Yvonne Willmott  
Age: 51  
Status: Divorced, with two grown-up children, aged 24 and 26.

Occupation: Civil servant and nurse

The problem: Yvonne knows that if she is to get the best from her savings the time has come to put her personal finances under the microscope. Planning for a secure retirement is high on her list of priorities.

A qualified nurse, now working as a civil servant, Yvonne does have the benefit of a sizeable salary of £40,000 a year, which means she can put aside a reasonable amount each month. Her fixed outgoings account for about half her net monthly income, in addition to which she needs to pay for the running of her car, as well as holidays, clothes and other social expenditure.

Last year she bought a new home for £70,000 with a £47,000 interest-only mortgage over 10 years from Bradford & Bingley. She was offered a discounted rate, 1.5 per cent below the standard variable rate for the first five years. She was advised to set up a personal equity plan (PEP) as a repayment vehicle for the loan and is presently putting £287 a month into a Schroder UK Enterprise Unit Trust PEP. She also has a tax-exempt special savings account (Tessa) and a number of endowment policies.

Yvonne estimates she can salt away about £500 a month to help build up her retirement nest-egg and, with a permanent contract of employment, she expects to be able to continue with this level of saving until she gives up work.

The adviser: Graham Bates of Bates & Partners. Capital

House, 151, Otley Old Road, Leeds, LS16 6HN. Telephone: 0113-2955955.

The advice: The PEP fund she has selected concentrates on capital growth from investment in smaller and medium-sized companies. It has an excellent track record, and achieved a total return of 131.78 per cent over the five years to last November. It would make sense for her to increase her plan contribution up to £500 a month, the maximum an individual can put into a PEP in each tax year.

Although PEP investments will no longer be available after April 1999, it will still be possible to put up to £5,000 a year into an unit-linked Individual Savings Account (ISA) and her mortgage is less than the proposed lifetime limit of £50,000 for investment in an ISA.

Yvonne does have several other investments already in place, including a second-generation Tessa with Nationwide. This is a secure investment and, although the return on capital is likely to be conservative, the tax concession is well worth having, bearing in mind Yvonne's status as a higher rate taxpayer.

She also has about £2,000 in a Postal Account with Nationwide and a fixed-term bond, also for about £2,000, due to mature next month. For everyday purposes she keeps a minimum balance of about £200 in a current account with Midland Bank.

Some time ago Yvonne took out four separate endowment savings plans with the Royal National Pension Fund for Nurses, to which she contributes £115 each month. One of these policies is due to mature in just over five years and is expected to realise about £1,800. The



Low-risk returns: A with-profits bond could protect Yvonne Willmott from the stock markets' volatility

other three mature just before her 60th birthday and show projected benefits of £8,900.

She would like to keep a few thousand available for ready access in case the need arises to help out either of her two children. In fact, later this year she is expecting repayment of £2,000 which she lent her daughter for a trip to New Zealand and one of her objectives is to invest this money for growth.

Although her primary objective is for capital growth now, she does feel that once she has retired it would be nice to benefit from some investment income to help top up her pension. In particular, she needs to know what to do with the £4,000 in capital she will have when her daughter has repaid the loan and the Nationwide bond matures. And if she decides to top up her PEP to £500 a month this will still leave £213 available for regular savings.

She is happy to take a balanced risk approach but she has

a strong interest in ethical matters and would not be comfortable investing in either individual companies or funds unless they could demonstrate an ethical approach.

Given the sums involved and the relatively short period until retirement, one sensible option would be to invest the £4,000 in a low-risk with-profits bond, where it will not be exposed to the day-to-day volatility of the stock market but there is a good chance the capital will perform better than if it is left languishing in a deposit account. It will also be more tax-efficient as there is no personal liability to basic income tax and higher-rate taxpayers can take withdrawals of up to 5 per cent a year without triggering additional tax.

Friends Provident, a company well-known for its Quaker roots and ethical investments, has a with-profits fund worth looking at. The declared annual bonus is currently 6.5 per cent, in addition to which there is

potential for a terminal bonus after five years. When looking for the right home for Yvonne's regular monthly savings, the Credit Suisse Fellowship Trust is a well-established ethical fund, which over 10 years has grown by 153.05 per cent.

Making sure she has adequate pension is also high on her list of priorities. Until six months ago she was a member of the NHS pension scheme but is now in the process of switching to the Principal Civil Service Pension Fund. This involves no penalties and means that Yvonne will have to contribute only 1.5 per cent of her annual salary instead of 6 per cent with the NHS scheme.

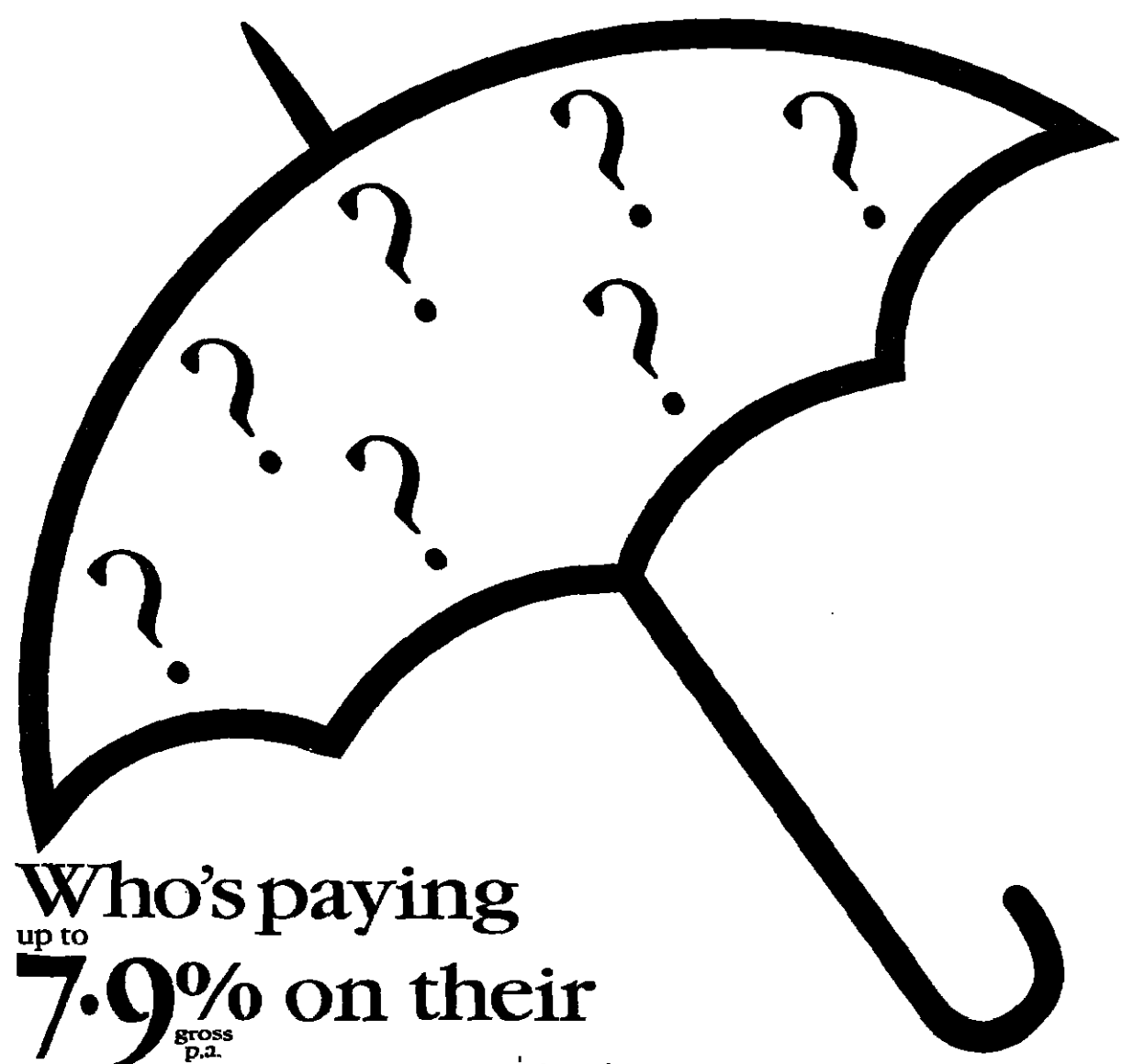
She does not have enough years of service left to get a maximum pension and, with this in mind, she has already started a free-standing additional voluntary contribution (FSAVC) plan with Friends Provident. Although she has been advised to make regular monthly payments to her FSAVC, she is

likely to fare better by adding single contributions as and when spare cash is available.

Finally, Yvonne wonders if she should try to sell an endowment policy she took out with Scottish Amicable five years ago. Unfortunately, it is a 25-year policy and has not been in place long enough for this to be an option. The monthly payment of £60 is not a problem and, since she would lose out by simply encashing the policy, the best course is to keep the plan going.

With everything considered she should end up with a good spread of investments helping to pay off her mortgage and providing a nest egg for a happy and comfortable retirement.

If you would like to be considered for a free financial makeover contact Andrew Verity at The Independent, 1, Canada Square, London E14 5DL, or e-mail a.verity@independent.co.uk. Candidates should be willing to have their photograph published.



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# 3/PERSONAL FINANCE

THE INDEPENDENT  
SATURDAY 34 JANUARY 1998

## On piste or on poster, skiing is expensive

Feeling nostalgic about your skiing holiday? You can always buy a poster, says John Windsor - but it will cost you a lot more than a week in the powder.

Collectables of the future are notoriously difficult to spot, but whenever one emerges it seems obvious in retrospect. Christie's South Kensington is holding its first auction dedicated to ski posters on 6 February (10.30am). Hitherto, they have been scattered in South Ken's three yearly sales of 19th and 20th century posters.

Even Japanese buyers have been asking for condition reports on the posters. They are fascinated by British period style. It was the intrepid British middle class that founded the Swiss skiing industry in the last century. Winter tourism in the Alps is said to have gained popularity in 1864, when the owner of the Kulm hotel in St Moritz invited a group of British summer holidaymakers for a free holiday in January, promising them a month of sun. Klosters, now a favourite of the Royals, welcomed its first winter sports enthusiasts in 1904 and Murren, in the Jungfrau region, became the birthplace of the ski package holiday in 1910, when a British Methodist minister, Henry Lunn, founded the British Public Schools Alpine Sports Club and persuaded hotels there to open in the winter.

It all came to an end in 1929, when the stock market crashed. But now that the Brits are once again back in the money they want more ski holidays - and more ski posters as souvenirs.

South Ken auctioneer Richard Barclay noticed that the

market for ski posters was picking up at last year's general poster auctions. He got on the phone to dealers and collectors and assembled 241 ski posters dating from 1895 to 1970 for the forthcoming first dedicated sale. Estimates range from £200 to £5,000. So far, this is a relatively raw market, fuelled by nostalgic holiday skiers - the sort with Alpine chalets who want a colourful poster or two for their architect-designed kitchen. It remains to be seen whether they will absorb 241 posters in one go. However, astute promotion by a big London auctioneer tends to be self-fulfilling.

Until more discerning collector-investors enter the bidding in earnest, prices will remain unsettled. You might pick up an unrecognised rarity cheaply - or become embroiled in an expensive saleroom duel between bidders who are mad keen to own a decorative old poster of their favourite resort, unaware that it is relatively common.

Nevertheless, the criteria of what makes a ski poster valuable are emerging. To invest, look for pre-war posters with obvious period flavour - that is, those showing people with period hairstyles, clothes and skis. Those by artists whose names are already sought after by poster collectors have added value. By buying these, you can rely on the support of an established collectors' market that is forcing up prices for posters that qualify as art. Even the film poster market, hot for stars' names and sex-appeal, has developed an eye for French and Italian artwork.

For example, the colourful posters of the French Art Deco artist Roger Broders are already sought after, whether or not they show skiing. In the Twen-



Flying high: Tamagno's Chamonix poster is estimated at £2,500-£3,500. Digelmann's bunny - just a furry freak?



ties and Thirties he was commissioned by the Paris Lyon Mediterranean Railway (PLM) to help lure English-speaking tourists to French ski resorts.

His PLM colour lithograph Winter Sports in the French Alps of about 1930, which is cited in collectors' guides to posters, is estimated £1,200-£1,600 in the forthcoming sale. It has period people, including a young woman skier with late Twenties-style permanent-wave hair carrying old-fashioned wooden skis and, in the background, an old-fashioned puff-

puff ski railway, ensuring cross-over interest from railway poster collectors. One sold for £1,320 at a South Ken poster sale in 1994 and last October one was bid up to a whopping £2,070. How many bidders still want one? And how many more copies are awaiting consignment to auction by eager profit-takers? In a new market like this, you can never tell. But this poster will always be a classic.

Similarly, the work of Francisco Tamagno (born 1851, date of death uncertain) is establishing a healthy track record.

South Ken have estimated his turn of the century PLM poster for the Chamonix winter sports at £2,500-£3,500. It shows, suspended precariously in mid-air, a daredevil skier couple in white winter woollies, she with bonnet and long skirt, both without ski poles. What might have happened to them is a good talking point that adds value. In the June sale last year, one fetched an astonishing £4,830 against an estimate of £1,800-£2,300. This one is in better condition - but will it be fought over as fiercely? Some-

one, somewhere, could soon be kicking themselves.

And do you fancy a gamble on the ski bunny? Alex Digelmann's poster of about 1950 shows St Moritz's emblematic rabbit haring down the piste. It is estimated £500-£700, indicating that the auctioneers consider last October's high price for one - £2,070 despite creasing - was a furry freak. The trouble with rabbits is they breed.

Christie's South Kensington, 85 Old Brompton Road, London SW7 (0171-581 7611).

## Sites that make filing your return less taxing

ROBIN AMLÖT

### INTERNET INVESTOR



Only seven days to go before the deadline so now would be a good time to get serious about your tax return if you have not already done so.

To save yourself paying the tax man any more than you really have to, you should make sure of three things by this time next week: that your tax return is filed; that your tax liability for 1996/97 is paid in full and that your first payment on account for 1997/98 is paid. The trick, I am told, is to stop thinking of it as "your" money.

If you have been putting off and putting off and putting off tackling your return because of its complexity, you may take some consolation from being in the company of one of the greatest minds of all time. Even Albert Einstein claimed: "The hardest thing in the world to understand is income tax!" But Einstein didn't have the benefit of the web for assistance.

My first port of call was the Chartered Institute of Taxation's website. The institute has over 10,000 members who are all qualified tax practitioners.

The site explains self-assessment in detail and has regularly updated tax tips. For those suffering severe sense of humour failure over self-assessment, the institute's website may provide a small lift with its collection of jokes and quotations about tax.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants also has a website which includes a geographical directory of members to help you find an accountant near you.

Elsewhere on the web you will find Tax Fix, set up specifically to help people with their self-assessment forms. Tax Fix is one of a handful of organisations to gain Inland Revenue approval to lodge clients' tax returns electronically and get acceptance - or queries - within 48 hours.

This promised response time has become more of a factor now than it might have been a couple of months ago!

The Inland Revenue does have its own explanatory site to assist you, hosted by Hector, the friendly taxman, an oryxomem memorably described as a moon-lighting Home Pride flour

grader with a Hitler moustache.

However, it could be well worth your while checking out the frequently asked questions (FAQs) on Hector's site to make sure that you are not making any of the common mistakes which are highlighted.

Remember, if you send your tax return in but it is wrong and is returned to you, you need to make the correction and get the form back to the Inland Revenue by the deadline or face the automatic fine. Better to get it right first time.

Of course, you are not required to use the services of an accountant or a tax adviser to tackle your tax return. If you are feeling up to it yourself there are still plenty of ways in which you make your own life easier.

There are a number of software programmes which can help you fill in your return and work out what you need to pay.

You can order TaxCalc from Which Software and Intuit's QuickTax add-on through the web but if you feel the urge to buckle down and get on with the job straight away you could immediately download SmartTax from the web, paying with your credit card.

In the future, paying your tax is likely to involve downloading a form from the Inland Revenue website, filling it in on screen, attaching a digital signature and e-mailing it back to the taxman together with payment details.

In fact, this is technically possible now. The government began testing the use of digital signatures in December for people wanting to register as self-employed.

One final thought - does self assessment mean the United Kingdom will become a land of untold wealth? After all, it was John Maynard Keynes who said that: "The avoidance of taxes is the only pursuit that still carries any reward."

Chartered Institute of Taxation: [www.tax.org.uk](http://www.tax.org.uk)  
Institute of Chartered Accountants: [www.icaew.co.uk](http://www.icaew.co.uk)  
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## A Direct Line to cheaper pension provision?

**Direct Line, the bargain basement insurer, this week presented itself as the new saviour of the nation's retirement incomes as it launched a no-nonsense pension. Such is its clout that it was immediately attacked by the other pretender to that role, Virgin Direct. Andrew Ferry reports.**

It very nearly goes without saying: none of us saves enough to be comfortable in retirement. Nevertheless, Direct Line, the downmarket direct insurer, has commissioned a survey to tell us why. The sobering facts are worth repeating.

According to the Mori survey of more than 1,000 adults, over half of us are honest enough to admit we have no idea how much money is in our pension fund. On average, we reckon we will get a pension income of £852 a month. In fact, if things stay as they are, we will get an average of just £200; perilously close to the poverty line.

Direct Line's life insurance wing

accuses the bewildered British public of being in a state of "guilty inertia", knowing what is needed but constantly procrastinating because of other financial pressures. The company's chief executive, Duncan MacKechie, says: "There is a real need to bridge the gap between people's expectations for their retirement and the pessimism which currently exists about the state of current pension provision."

The state of pension saving is dire, says the survey, and we're all a bit ignorant about it. But should we follow the next conclusion, that Direct Line can provide the solution?

The company is famous for its shake-up of motor insurance. Because motor insurance is compulsory, costs can be cut by eliminating the "middleman", the insurance broker, and appealing straight to the public through friendly TV ads. In the early 1990s, the company was able to undercut other insurers to such an extent that the whole market was forced to follow. Few companies now take a big profit from motor insurance.

Direct Line evidently believes the same can be done to the pensions market. The Government wants low-cost, private schemes for everyone. Personal pensions have, it says, been much too

expensive, with charges eating up as much as a third of contributions. This is because the provider has to cover commissions to the sales people in the middle who sell them (which have risen by up to 60 per cent in the past five years).

Direct Line believes it can overcome our inertia by bringing out a straightforward, no-nonsense pension. By appealing directly to consumers, it does not have to pay commission. So its products will be cheaper.

The rhetoric has a familiar ring: very similar to that of Tesco's Virgin, Legal & General, Marks & Spencer, Eagle Star and Scottish Widows, who have all launched "direct" pensions in the last two years. Is Direct Line doing anything new?

At first it looks very cheap. Direct Line's new customers get charged 1 per cent of their fund per year. They can invest in a fund that tracks the FTSE 100 - or just put their money on deposit. Payments can be by cheque or direct debit. Easy.

Well, not quite. Sensing heavy-weight competition, rivals such as Virgin and Legal & General have rushed out statements insisting their pensions are cheaper. Virgin seizes on an extra fee. Only 98 per cent of every

pound at First Direct will, in effect, be invested (a common practice known as "reduced allocation"). Virgin's £2 a month is easier to understand. Not only that, says Virgin, "Direct Line's limits are restrictive. You have to invest at least £75 a month. With Virgin, invest what you like, when you like as long as it's £50 or more," a statement from Virgin said.

Are Virgin being, as the slogan says, Virgin Direct? Well, not quite. If £50 was invested with Virgin, its charges would be £2 plus a 1 per cent fund management charge - or 5 per cent of your investment. Considering Virgin says it is appealing to people with all levels of income, this is not all that cheap.

Because it charges by percentage, Direct Line's pension is cheaper for smaller contributions. At £75 a month, its charges amount to 3 per cent. Virgin's are a fifth higher, at 3.7 per cent.

The bickering over cheaper pensions also masks a more important debate. Virgin and Direct Line are cheap partly because they offer a cheap way of investing their customers' pension savings. Just stick it in a fund which tracks the FTSE 100 index, they say. Over the long term, active fund managers never do as well as the index

- and they are more expensive, so the charge is bigger.

Unfortunately, some of these arguments may be wearing thin. Customers have validly protested in the past that a 1.5 per cent charge on their savings, much of which goes to the extravagant salaries paid to fund managers, is not value for money. Between October 1995 and September 1997, less than one third of UK unit trusts got more from their investments than a fund tracking the FTSE 100. But in the last quarter of last year, nearly half did just as well, according to figures from HSBC Asset Management.

According to received wisdom, active fund managers will do better than tracker funds in a bear market. And over the long term, investment performance can have a much greater effect on the size of a pension fund than charges will. Cheaper, in other words, may not always mean better.

*'The Independent' has published a free 26-page guide to pension planning, written by Nic Cicutti, personal finance editor. The guide, sponsored by Eagle Star, discusses what kind of pension you may need, and how to find it. It is available by calling 0800 776666. Or fill in the coupon on page 6.*

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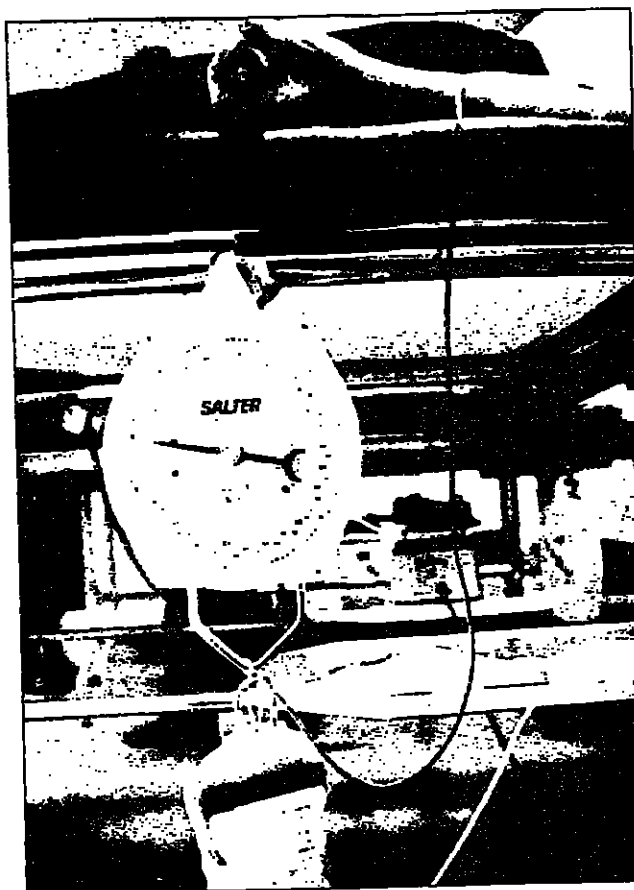








# 6/PERSONAL FINANCE



Blood money: Ads are targeting students

John Voos

The NUS is warning hard-pressed students against responding to ads offering quick and easy cash for taking part in drug trials. Paul Slade reports.

Small ads in the back of magazines such as *Private Eye*, *Fortean Times* and the *Big Issue* promise payments of up to £125 a day for subjects used to test the safety and efficiency of new prescription drugs. They refer to trials not only in the UK but world-wide.

The advertisers are not the clinics carrying out the trials, but companies hoping to sell people who reply a list of clinics to contact. For many respondents, the only alternative may be bar or restaurant work paying little more than £3 an

hour and the offers sound seductive.

The information sent out by one advertiser, Phase II Services, says: "As it is such a quick and easy way to raise a large lump sum of money in a few days, many volunteers go back time and time again, when they need money for a holiday, to see them through Christmas, to pay off loans and overdrafts or just to help them get through their next term at college."

The National Union of Students (NUS) says the danger arises less from the trials themselves, which may be perfectly legitimate, but from people anxious to earn the cash involved lying in order to take part. This is believed to be the cause of two student deaths in 1985.

"What appeared to be happening in the mid-Eighties was that people were not revealing the truth about other

medication they were taking or possible risk factors to the clinical practitioners when they were taking part in tests, because they wanted the money," an NUS spokeswoman says. "We feel there shouldn't be a significant financial inducement. We really don't want people to be putting their lives at risk for the sake of money."

"We're very aware of people trying to promote this to students. I think they target anybody who wants money, and students will always fall into that category. Some companies do promote it as money for nothing."

Phase II's literature claims one volunteer recently collected £5,000 plus air fare for a six-week trial in Germany. Another company selling the lists, LFC of Great Yarmouth, mentions a fee of £1,200 for three overnight stays.

Richard Ley of the Association of British Pharmaceutical Companies, which represents the drug manufacturers who must carry out these trials, says: "Our guidelines state that, while volunteers may be rewarded in cash or in kind, the amount should be reasonable. Payment of large amounts is discouraged, because we don't want people volunteering repeatedly for experiments for financial gain."

"Clearly, if money's being offered, it's always going to be part of the equation, but it's not something you should be doing because you're short of cash."

UK trials are policed by independent Ethical Review Boards which must approve them for safety. Trial subjects must also be told what the trial is for, what the risks might be and what compensation may be available if anything goes wrong.

One of the NUS's main concerns is trials abroad, where visitors from the UK may find any problems which arise are far more difficult to sort out. Phase II's directory lists "over 100 clinics around the world which are currently recruiting", only 15 of which are in the UK. Phase II sells its own directory for £10 a copy.

Lesley Newson, director of a clinical trials unit in Plymouth, says: "We have got a couple of volunteers who got our number from one of these lists, but we don't have anything to do with the companies producing them. I don't know whether the people placing these ads are vetting the organisations, and I don't know how they choose the telephone numbers and addresses they put on their lists."

One *Private Eye* advertiser distributing the LFC list admits

he has no idea how the list is put together, but simply sends out the list as it stands. Phase II Services bosses Nicholas Ledger and Robert Coates could not be reached.

Continuing cutbacks in state funding mean all but a tiny handful of students now have to earn some kind of outside income to support their studies. A recent survey by the GMB found that one in three students is missing lectures because of part-time work.

Mr Ley is also concerned at ads for trials being aimed particularly at groups such as students or the unemployed, who may be desperate for cash. "That doesn't mean unemployed people and students can't be accepted for trials, but companies shouldn't be targeting all their information and promotional stuff at them," he says.

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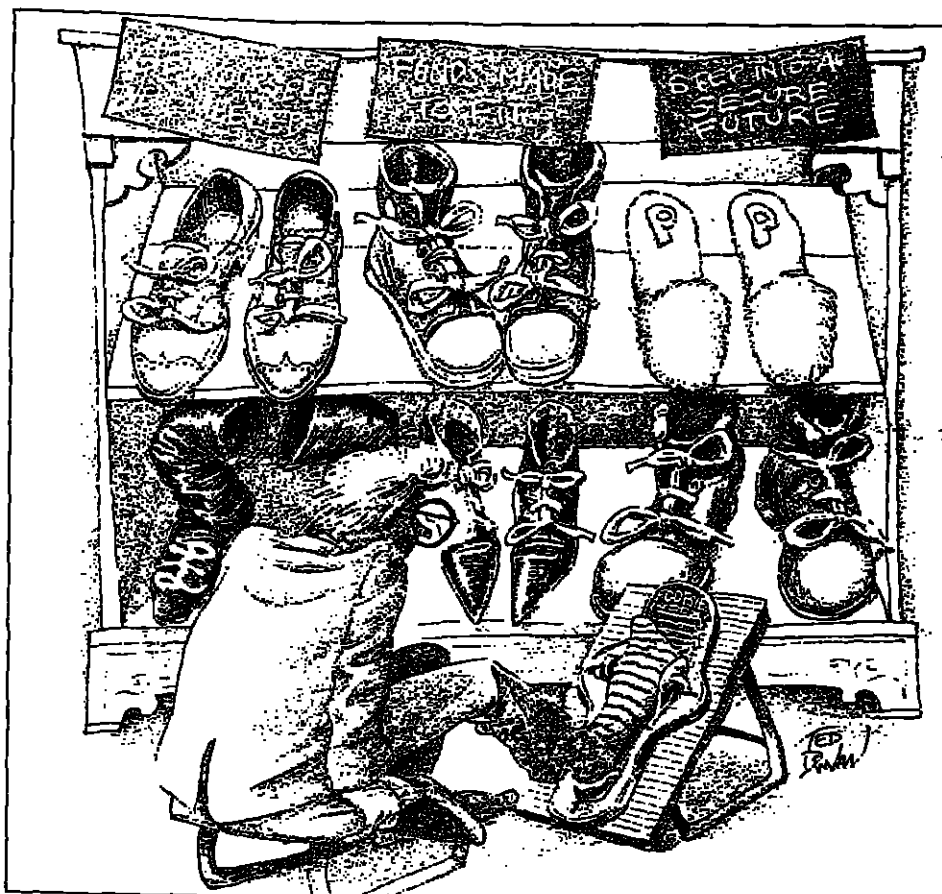


# 7/PERSONAL FINANCE

THE INDEPENDENT  
SATURDAY 24 JANUARY 1998

## Try these books for size

There's no shortage of authors willing to offer fool-proof plans for making money. But a good guide on basic investments or pension planning can be harder to find. Ian Morse scans the shelves to pick the best.



Some new year resolutions are harder to keep than others, but at least you can console yourself about not losing any weight with a drink and cigarette. If your list included sorting out your financial planning priorities there is still time for affirmative action.

One place to start is by educating yourself on the subject. Bookshop shelves groan with titles. If you are looking for an entry-level guide to financial planning, try Jonquil Lowe's *Be Your Own Financial Adviser*. One of a series published by the Consumers' Association, this deserves an award for its use of plain English and commonsense approach.

Suitable for all ages, it includes chapters on main areas of financial planning including mortgages, personal insurance, pension planning and lump-sum investment. The emphasis is on planning in a family context and some practical tools are included.

For instance, there are charts which allow you to calculate income, expenditure, and the cost of your financial planning targets. A glossary includes straightforward definitions of terms often more widely used than understood. A list of useful addresses will let you contact anyone from the Bank of England to the Funeral Planning Council.

Debbie Harrison's *Personal Financial Planner*, published by Pitman, covers some of the same ground, but without these practical tools. Instead, the emphasis is towards a more analytic, investment-orientated approach.

The costs of buying and selling both retail financial products

and equities is given useful coverage. Guidance is given on how to monitor investment performance.

Anyone enjoying this book may be led on to more specialist titles dealing with investment. These days, most of us buy equities through collective investments like unit and investment trusts.

Bruce G Williams's *Picking the Right Unit Trust* boldly promises the "secret of successful investment", with personal equity plan (PEP) secrets. It also boasts of "the easy, yet sophisticated, way to invest". These are big claims, as might be expected from a former vice-president of Citibank.

Perhaps reading this book will help if you are applying for a job with Citibank, but its emphasis on using PEPs as a means of building a portfolio looks redundant with Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs) on their way to replace them. Also, the secret of "the easy, sophisticated way to invest" turns out to be nothing more interesting than investing in tracker funds.

Joanna Slaughter's *Guide to Investment Trusts & Unit Trusts* is an even-handed introduction to the strengths and weaknesses of each type of investment, and for its category wins an award for plain English and the explication of inherently complex subject matter.

Tracker funds do not appear in its index, while PEPs get a single chapter. Elsewhere, Ms Slaughter gives a concise explanation of how to choose and manage an investment portfolio, with regard both to income and capital gains tax. A final chapter puts these collective investments into a variety of contexts, including school-fee provision and pension planning. A good value, middle-level guide.

For a summary of the analytic techniques used in investment decisions, try Caroline Sefton's *A-Z of Investment*. You may not actually buy share

options using "straddling and strangle" but if you ever meet a stranger on a train who talks about it, mutual misunderstanding can be avoided.

This book also contains a valuable, if brief, section on investment software, including the names and addresses of firms marketing programmes for use at home which have won approval from no less an authority than the *Investors Chronicle*.

For those interested in building up a share portfolio, Richard Koch's *Selecting Shares that Perform* offers to reveal "10 ways to beat the index". The great and wholly original feature of Mr Koch's opus is its inclusion of the (1-2-3) Test, designed by "that great American sage of human behaviour, Hal Leavitt".

Completing this test will tell you what kind of investment you should hold, thinks Mr Koch. It kicks off by asking: "Do you believe in God?", going on to: "Which of the next three characters are you most like, or least

unlike, (a) Hitler, (b) the Daleks, (c) Antia the Hun?" Readers should think carefully about exactly who deserves this book.

*Be Your Own Stockbroker* is more conventional. Its author, Charles Vincent, takes a classical stage-by-stage approach to explaining just where an individual stands in relation to broker and market.

This includes commonsense definitions of concepts like "price to earnings ratios, and how to apply them". Due space is given both to fundamental value as a criterion for buy/sell decisions, and also for the use of bar charts recording past performance to predict that of the future.

*The Financial Times Guide to Using the Financial Pages*, by Romesh Vaitilingham, is a complement to any such guide but, as its title suggests, also tells you where to find and how to use relevant information.

Unlike any of the other books surveyed, it also takes a broad-brush look at the relationship between macro-economic performance and investment returns, covering UK economic indicators in detail. A good buy for someone already interested in the subject.

Among books on pension provision, Barbara Ellis's *Perfect Pensions* is concise and serves as an entry-level guide. Its main drawback is lack of information on state pensions, covered at far greater length in Jonquil Lowe's *The Which? Guide to Pensions*. With a ready reckoner on how much income you will need in retirement, Ms Lowe's book goes into more detail, but is written mainly from an employee's perspective.

Tony Reardon's *Allied Dunbar Pensions Handbook* covers not just individual provision, but also the structure of both small and large company schemes. Written with an emphasis on Inland Revenue rules covering each type of provision, this will tell you all you need to know relevant to the type of provision you have. Used as a reference book by pension advisers, it is accessible to the general reader and highly recommended.

### OFF THE SHELF: BOOKS FOR INVESTORS

*Be Your Own Financial Adviser*, Jonquil Lowe  
Which? Consumer Guides, £9.99

*Personal Financial Planner*, Debbie Harrison  
Pitman Publishing £15.99

*Investment Specialist Titles*  
*Picking the Right Unit Trust*, Bruce G Williams  
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## Office landlords ride high on rising rental values

Foundations shift when the underlying clay, granite or global finance starts to rumble. Prosperity abroad brings prosperous foreign investors to these shores. Conversely, problems over there – the stock market in New York or Hong Kong, car manufacturing in Japan or the banking industry in Korea – create ripples here. Robert Liebman spoke to Londoners who analyse commercial property and to a former miner who is in the process of buying a property in Nottinghamshire.

Among its many privileges, the City of London provides omens regarding property throughout the entire nation. Ted Hartill, City Surveyor for the Corporation of London, cautions against generalising, not least because different pictures are emerging based on region and type of property. And reading tea leaves is hardly an exact science. But, as Mr Hartill notes, "historically, if business activity is high in the City, it spreads to the rest of the country eventually."

Business activity in the Square Mile has indeed been high. "The market came alive in September last year, and it has remained active both on the investment front and with prospective occupiers," says Mr Hartill. Even with the recent turbulence in Asia, confidence remains strong.

Central London is also booming, according to John Stephen, Investment Partner at Jones Lang Wootton. "We are seeing record levels of commitment and pre-letting activity in central London. By September 1997 investment turnover had

reached £3.2bn, already in excess of the full year total for every year since 1989." For the nation as a whole, J.L.W. anticipates that, like last year, 1998 will see returns in excess of 15 per cent.

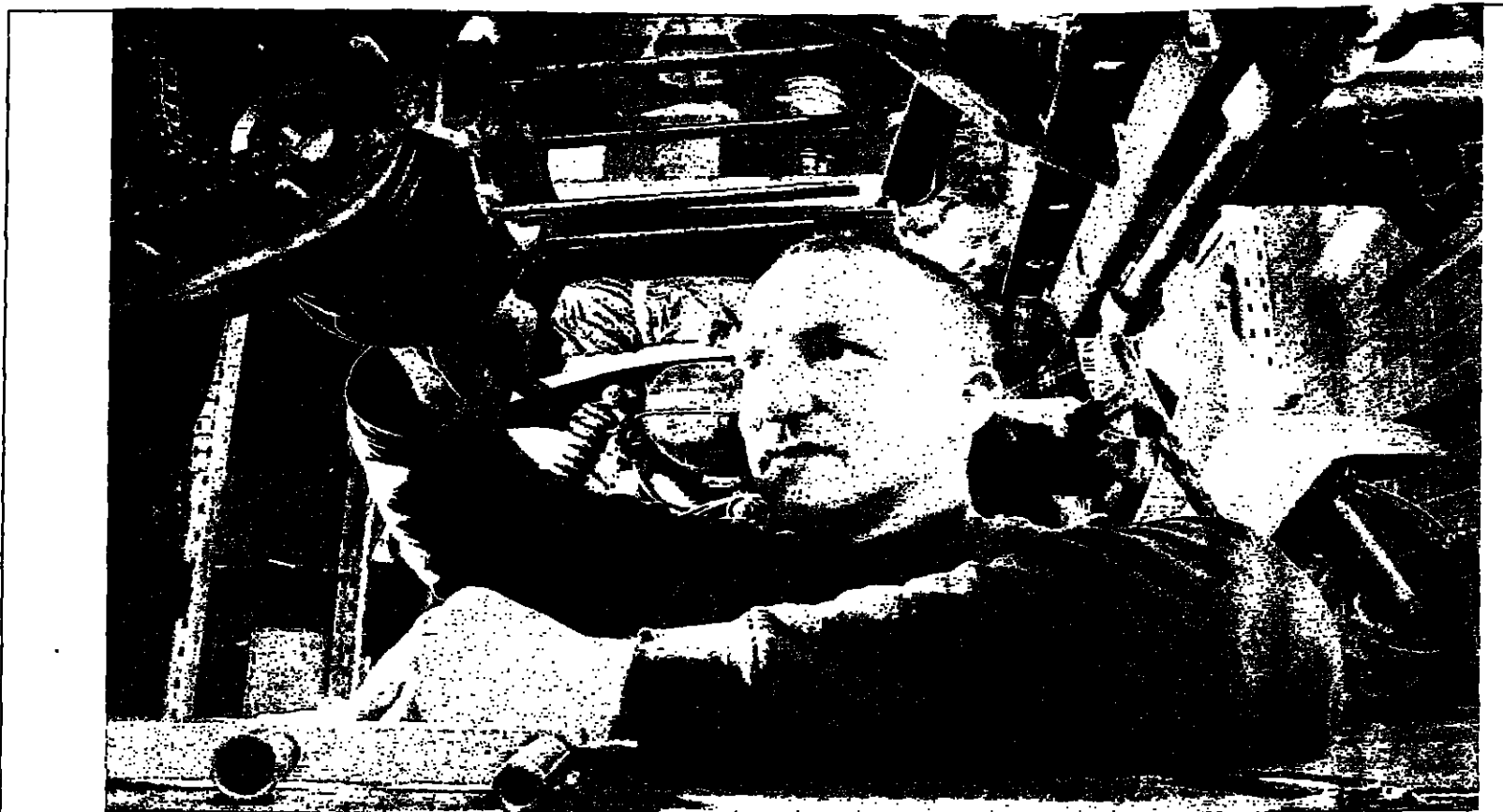
The office sector spells good news for landlords, not so good for tenants and occupiers looking to buy. "The oversupply of good-specification new and refurbished office accommodation has turned into a severe shortage of grade A space," says James Prowse, senior surveyor for Chesterton. "Few freeholds are available. Supply is likely to become increasingly tight on the back of planning restrictions governing development."

Similarly for renters, "the office market is now seeing the highest rents since the 1980s boom and they are set to climb higher in some areas," notes Mr Prowse.

Despite occupier optimism regarding space availability, "the reality is that new speculative development is limited, which precludes discounts," according to Chesterton's Simon Lloyd. "Although an occupier might be able to negotiate a cheap deal on an existing building, good-quality second-hand space is also rare," says Mr Lloyd, who is national director of industrial and warehouse property at Chesterton.

Retail property is monitored for Chesterton by Martin Crossley, who notes that this sector "is buoyant with numerous multiple and local retailers looking to take more and more shop premises. As a result, rents are being driven upwards and premiums are once again being paid for existing leases."

Crossley introduces a cautionary note, however. "The last strong period of rental growth and consumer spending was followed by a major recession and without the benefits of windfall payments and suchlike, the current consumer boom may be short-lived." For tenants, the wisest course might be short leases or break clauses.



Kevin Braithwaite has moved his scooter-repair business from his garden shed to 1,000 sq ft premises on a busy road

Page One

The Jones Lang Wootton report for Central London Offices for the third quarter of last year is also upbeat but cautionary. "Activity in the central London leasing and investment markets during the closing weeks of the third quarter was extraordinary, even by the standards of the 1980s." There is, however, a downside: "If good quality accommodation continues to be absorbed at the present rate, current supply could be exhausted within six months. This would be a highly unsatisfactory situation for occupiers and potentially for the competitiveness of London's economy."

Chesterton's Mr Lloyd notes that "some companies are exercising a degree of caution as profits are damaged by exchange rate levels, rising interest rates and general concerns regarding the Far East." But to Peter Evans, head of research at DTZ Debenham Thorpe, "anticipation of good performance, with the potential for the sec-

tor to outpace equities in 1998, is causing institutional investors and property companies to lift their commitment to commercial property. In parallel the banks are showing an increasing willingness to lend on property. To date there is no significant evidence to suggest increasing money flows will destabilise the market, at least for the foreseeable future."

In Mansfield, west Nottinghamshire, Kevin Braithwaite, 33, married with one daughter, started repairing scooters in his family garage and garden shed. Two years ago, he rented a 15-by-23-foot industrial unit from the council for £50 per week including rates. A larger space was for sale, but at £50,000 the freehold was beyond his grasp.

"Coming from an 8-by-12-foot garage, my council space looked huge. Now I've outgrown it." Luckily, the property he originally wanted to buy was still for sale.

Mr Braithwaite has purchased it, sub-

ject to planning permission. With approximately 1,000 sq ft (70ft by 15ft) he will have a showroom separate from the repair shop. Near the town centre and enjoying heightened visibility by being sideways to the main traffic, "it is on a road which gets lots of passing trade, and lots of traffic jams, so people have to notice me." Stuck in traffic, they may also pine for the traffic-eluding qualities inherent in the product he sells.

For Mansfield District Council, "I had to draw a ground plan showing all of the rooms and doors. I also prepared a plan showing road sizes and accesses. I already have permission for change of use, even though no one knows what the previous use actually was. I still have to submit plans for windows, shop signs and outside lights. If I knew earlier, I could have done all the plans at once. I may have to wait another eight weeks."

Mr Braithwaite wants to "make it look dead smart, but no grants are available."

He will be reimbursed for some of his solicitor's fee, however. "If I run into difficulties, I can let out some of the rooms in the back."

Meanwhile, back at Chesterton, Mr Lloyd maintains that "rents are likely to rise over the next 12-18 months from current levels, so it would be advisable to take the plunge now before leasing becomes more expensive."

Kevin Braithwaite, Two-Wheeled Engineering, Unit 2, Highfield Way, off Quarry Lane, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 5DF; 01623 427232

Chesterton, 34 Brook Street, London W1A 2BU; 0171 499 0404

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## You're trying to sell me a house. How do I know you're not a villain?

Estate agents have never been popular, but after a less than flattering TV portrayal their image is at an all-time low. Some experts in this free market bastion are saying that tighter regulation is in everyone's interests. Penny Jackson reports.

When Nick Harrington leaves his office in south London these days he is often greeted by the honking of car horns. Since he bravely, or maybe foolishly, put his head above the parapet for a BBC TV programme on estate agents recently, he is known to many more than the clients of Winkworth. As the day-to-day drama unfolded in Streatham, so every twist and turn in the business of buying and selling a home will have had viewers wincing. Whatever they made of the more troubled transactions, and wherever their sympathies lay, few could have failed to spot the weaknesses in the system.

Clearly, there is something about this business that brings out the worst in people. If the conduct of agents leaves something to be desired, so too does that of sellers and buyers. But it is the agents who are the professionals, or would like to be regarded as such, and it comes as a shock to others in the business to discover how poor the service can be. A woman in property consultancy who is househunting at the moment finds it an eye-opener. "We should all get out into the market more often. I have only just started looking, and have been kept waiting, given the wrong appointment, and then, after I said a house didn't suit me, told by the agent that of

course it did. If I would only do this or that to it. You can imagine what I felt like saying to her."

In the absence of any legal minimum standards of competence, the industry does seem to be doing its best to answer criticisms. This week has seen the ombudsman scheme extended beyond the corporate sector to include all subscribing estate agents. The three arms of the industry – the National Association of Estate Agents (NAEA), the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and the Incorporated Society of Valuers and Auctioneers (ISVA) – have all signed up.

Last year they also adopted a new code of practice. Finding a good agent should become less chancy. Andrew Jeffery, president of the NAEA says that anyone can complain to the ombudsman, and there is maximum compensation of £50,000. They are also encouraging whistle-blowers so that confidential reports can be passed on to the Office of Fair Trading. "We want to know if anyone, say, is overvaluing property to get an instruction, or of agents ring-fencing property – taking money from a purchaser not to pass on other offers to a vendor."

The last complete year of figures from the OFT shows that of the 5,363 complaints about estate agents, nearly 3,500 were about selling techniques. The worst of the spivs and wide boys may well have been swept away in the recession, but their reputation lingers. Many in the business are only too aware why that is. They see their duty to the vendor being used as an excuse to ride roughshod over buyers, and the status quo as an excuse for turning a blind eye to bad behaviour.

At the top end of the market, FPD Savills puts all its staff into a training pro-



Many estate agents are trying to improve their image with training courses for staff and better care for the buyer

gramme – nobody gets away with talking about "valuations" when they mean price guides. One of its most recent courses is on care for the buyer, who is often left feeling like the poor relation. "It is about time we paid them more attention, since in effect they pay all the bills," says Ian Stewart, a director of Savills. "Giving advice and full information to a purchaser doesn't mean you are not doing the best for the vendor. If you are not honest, you waste everyone's time." Ideally, an estate agent should be qualified to spot a potential problem with a property and encourage vendors to get a surveyor or builder in, not paper over the cracks. And there are two

many agents who never even advise their clients. How can we justify our commission if we simply pass on an offer with no professional guidance? Some of them even ask the client what they should do," he says.

Others agree. "I despair of this industry when it is so easy to do it correctly. You can work for your client and treat everyone how you would like to be treated," says Paul Williams of Holden Matthews in Islington, north London. "The system is often criticised for being so slow, so we encourage the vendor to get moving with title deeds and even the search, as the house goes on to market. It can save weeks."

Such initiatives are becoming more

common among agents who are prepared to take action about the crawling speed of transactions, and the potential for gazumping. David Bedford, of Bedfords in Bury St Edmunds, sees some 40 per cent of his sales go through with a pre-sale survey. "The vendor commissions a structural survey for which he is reimbursed by the purchasers. They then deal direct with the surveyor. The joy is that only one person has to pay for the survey. It also shows the vendor is committed to selling, which has been a problem recently."

He also believes gazumping is often caused by incompetent negotiations. "If you set a guide price, you may have more

disappointed buyers but less gazumping. It is ludicrous to say you can sell a house in say two days. How can that be in the client's best interest? Nor is he alone in disliking the practice of agents earning personal rather than office commission. "Staff in competition with each other should be selling second-hand cars, not homes."

Now that the Property Misdescription Act has put a stop to imaginative and untruthful marketing, the general consensus is that some form of licensing, and mandatory standards of competence, are overdue. Adrian Britton, RICS director of professional services, believes there must be some control over who can work as an estate agent. Even though there are a number of recognised avenues for vocational training, they are entirely voluntary. "We work in an unregulated environment, yet those powers have been available since 1979. Financial services were regulated, and yet we were not accorded the same priority even though a home is the largest investment most people will make."

George Pope of John D Wood, who has long advocated that standards of competence should be imposed, believes they should be in addition to practical experience. "Learning about an area from a busy office is invaluable. However well qualified a valuer, it is still pointless to send someone from, say, Romford to Fulham and expect them to come up with the right figure, which is not unknown for building societies." At least the valuer didn't stay in the car, which is how one consulting engineer has seen the job done.

So whether qualifications would see an end to bad behaviour is one thing, but at least an estate agent would need more than just charm and the manner of a second-hand car salesman.

### THREE TO VIEW: IN DORSET

Dairy House Farm (below left) in Kingston Magna, near Shaftesbury is a Grade II listed, stone-built house with four bedrooms and three bathrooms, standing in more than two acres of gardens and paddock. The con-

necting sitting- and drawing-rooms have flagstone floors, and there is a flagstone hearth with multi-fuel stove. The house has a 21ft dining-room, a laundry room and a 28ft kitchen with terracotta-tiled floor. The

main bedroom, with Victorian cast-iron fireplace, leads to a dressing-room and bathroom with cast-iron, roll-top bath with claw feet. Outside are a double garage and two outbuildings.

Strutt & Parker is asking for offers around £400,000 (01722 328741).

Glebe Cottage (centre) in Piddletrenthide, near Dorchester, is Grade II listed, with a

thatched roof and brick-and-flint walls. The cottage has roses growing around the door.

The 23ft sitting-room has an open fireplace and wood-burner. An open staircase rises to the two first-floor bedrooms. Outside, the large gardens include an ornamental pond with waterlilies and parking space for three cars.

Symonds & Sampson is asking around £120,000 (01305 265058).

Upper Cobb House (below right), in Lyme Regis, overlooks the sea in one direction and National Trust land in the other. The three-reception, four-bedroom house has easy access to the famous Undercliff, made famous by the book and the film of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*.

A Grade II listed Regency house, it has rendered walls in colourwashed Tuscan yellow with dark green shutters, while inside it has carved ceilings in the main reception rooms. With a study, playrooms, a double garage, a terraced Italian-style garden with gazebo and about an acre of garden, it is for sale through Strutt & Parker, for offers above £425,000 (01392 215631).







Anna, Adrian Lukis's daughter, has learned about the dangers in their flat from watching her parents, and even Molly the cat comes and goes as she pleases

Peter Macdarmid

## The clatter of tiny feet

A London flat may be ideal for singles or couples. But what if there are young children to house as well? Fiona Brandhorst talks to two families making the most of their homes.

When actor Adrian Lukis was looking to buy a flat in London with his wife Michelle six years ago, it wasn't just a question of finance and location. It also had to suit a very active toddler.

So when they bought the top two floors of a Victorian property with its high skylighted ceiling and spiral staircase leading to galleried bedrooms, they were determined to make it work for their daughter too.

"It was fatally impractical for a toddler," says Adrian. "At first we simply didn't use the spiral staircase because it was just too dangerous. We put up a barrier at the bottom and shared one big bed in the bedroom off the living room." Happily, Anna has adapted well and has "grown up with the dangers just by watching us," says Michelle.

Adrian, who's currently starring in *Peak Practice*, spends much of his time

on location in the Derbyshire countryside. So what's it like coming back to a shared garden? "Awkward. We don't like invading someone's else's space with a child." Their flat, however, in a quiet backwater south of the river, overlooks a park that the family likes to call its own.

"We often sit up here drinking coffee with friends watching our children riding round the park on their bikes," says Adrian. "They can have their independence without going out of sight," adds Michelle.

Anna's love of animals hasn't been restricted by living in a flat. Molly the cat is free to come and go as she pleases, while George the "house-trained" rabbit lives in his hutch in their former family bedroom.

As Anna has grown, the clutter of toys has been replaced by her "bicycle, rollerblades and riding boots" vying for space in the narrow entrance hall. "We've had to reduce clutter to a minimum so we could co-exist more easily," says Adrian. However, they've recently made a decision to expand their home by buying the ground floor of the house when it came on the market at the end of last year.

"It's a bit like playing Monopoly," says Michelle. "We tried to find another property locally and although we could think of a hundred reasons to move, we kept coming back to two reasons to stay: the view and the neighbours." All they needed was more space. They enjoy living in a "community that gets on with its life", giving them the anonymity they desire. On a good day it's only a 20-minute drive to the City or West End and Anna is firmly settled at the local state school.

Having more space will also solve the increasing problem of privacy. Michelle works from home as a psychotherapist and when she has an evening client, Adrian and Anna have to make themselves scarce. The ground floor would provide a study and Anna would like a playroom somewhere in the house. It would also release the upper-level master bedroom so that Adrian can have his longed-for "den" where he can retreat to study scripts or play his acoustic guitar.

Adrian and Michelle bought the first floor from interior designer John Gillah and he has been commissioned to redesign the new acquisition in keeping with the original's dramatic and

theatrical feel. Now eight years old, Anna is bound to approve and she'll no longer have to share her garden.

Sylvia and Richard Clifford would only view ground-floor flats with the sole use of a garden when they were looking to buy a home five months before the arrival of their first child. The small rear garden is "big enough for a paddling pool" but it's not sufficiently screened from bordering backyards. "On one side of us the garden's unused and overgrown," says Sylvia. "On the other our neighbours have children and we get on really well, but it would be awkward if we didn't."

Like many conversions, the internal layout of the flat is "peculiar": the bathroom, for instance, is off the living room. "The biggest drawback is having the children in the room next to us in the evenings as opposed to somewhere upstairs," says Sylvia.

The noise level from the Cliffords' flat has increased considerably with the arrival of Louise, now three and Eleanor, 10 months. This is a worry for Sylvia, since the neighbour above works from home most of the time. She finds his occasional use of loud expletives emanating from above

amusing but she's not sure what he makes of her "mother from hell tendencies". "It's all very well shouting at the girls at the time, but 10 minutes later I have to face him in the hallway when they are looking their angelic best. It's all very embarrassing."

The flat is near to good bus routes and a short walk to the station but, even better, it's literally on the doorstep of and thus in the catchment area of an over-subscribed local school. Flats in their street will always appeal to families with school-age children.

Living on the ground floor makes leaving the flat with the children easier. "I can flush them out into the hall when they're ready, so they can't keep running back for things. And they don't have to negotiate stairs."

Sylvia and Richard lost a reception room when Louise moved into her own bedroom but luckily they didn't have much furniture to re-house. However, the flat gets pretty crowded when they have grandparents or friends to stay. "Louise and Eleanor will outgrow the space and we can see privacy becoming a problem at puberty," says Sylvia. "If we want a third child we'll definitely have to move."



PENNY JACKSON

## Rural peace lifts prices in London

Everyone visiting Harrods Village, the Berkeley Homes development in Barnes, south-west London, asks the same question. Will Hammersmith Bridge reopen to all? Since the through traffic has disappeared Barnes has rediscovered its village roots and the benefits of public and two-wheeled transport. Residents' alarm at being denied the most direct route by car over the river has turned into greater alarm at the thought of their new-found peace being destroyed. Those on the main route to the bridge claim it has added value to their houses. On the site of the Harrods Depository - the familiar Thames landmark - half of the first phase of the newly built homes have been sold. English Heritage is working with Berkeley Homes on the refurbishment of the main depository building with its brick and terracotta salvaged in the 19th century from the Piccadilly tube station and two factories alongside. In total there will be 125 new homes and the same number of converted properties on a secure development with a leisure club, conference facilities, swimming, gymnasium and riverside gardens. Better than any garden, perhaps, are the adjoining acres of lake and reed beds, a sanctuary for wildfowl. Prices in the current phase range from £190,000 for a one-bedroom apartment to £495,000 for a three-bedroom town house, while top prices in the refurbished buildings are expected to be in the region of £2m and will exceed the nearby Barnes Waterside, where owners have already seen values rise. Sales office: 0181 741 7401.

In rural Cheshire, an estate of parkland and gardens is about to see a 17th century timber-framed house arrive in its midst. PJ Livesey Rural Heritage, the developers of Bostock Hall near the village of Davenham, is rescuing the historic Platt Hall from its entirely unsuitable site in the grounds of a Northwich chemical factory. Border Oak, designers and builders of oak-framed houses, will dismantle the building and rebuild it in the grounds of the Bostock Hall development. The structure will be photographed, catalogued and drawn joint by joint and every carpenter's mark recorded. The disassembled frame will then be analysed for clues to its history before being restored and placed on its new foundations. Platt Hall will then be sold as a private house for a price in the region of £350,000.

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